

Friends That Fail Not

Light Essays
Concerning Books

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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Cecil Headlam

FRIENDS THAT FAIL NOT

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LIGHT ESSAYS CONCERNING BOOKS

BY

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THE STORY OF NUREMBERG; THE MARRIAGE OF MR. MOLYNEUX,
ETC., ETC.

LONDON

HURST AND BLACKETT, LIMITED
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET

1902

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PRINTED BY KELLY'S DIRECTORIES LIMITED,
LONDON AND KINGSTON.

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“ My never-failing friends are they
With whom I converse day by day.”

—ROBERT SOUTHEY.

“ My old friends, my Books . . . have forgiven my
neglect and summon me back to the old intimacy.”

—MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO.

“ In a library we are surrounded with many
hundreds of dear friends.”

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

“ And as for me though that I kon but lyte
On bokës for to rede I me delyte,
And to hem give I feyth and full credence,
And in myn herte have hem in reverence.”

—CHAUCER.

“ Faut des auteurs : pas trop n'en faut ;
L'excès en tout est un défaut.”

—MORCEAU.

“ Or books or nothing.”

—JOHN FORD.

“ right books . . . the tracks of fled souls and
their milky way.”

—HENRY VAUGHAN.

“ That place that does contain my books, my best
companions, is to me
A glorious court, where, hourly, I converse
With the old sages and philosophers.”

—BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

“ Ille velut fidis arcana sodalibus olim
Credebat libris, neque, si male cesserat, usquam
Decurrens alio, neque si bene.”

—QUINTUS HORATIUS FLACCUS.

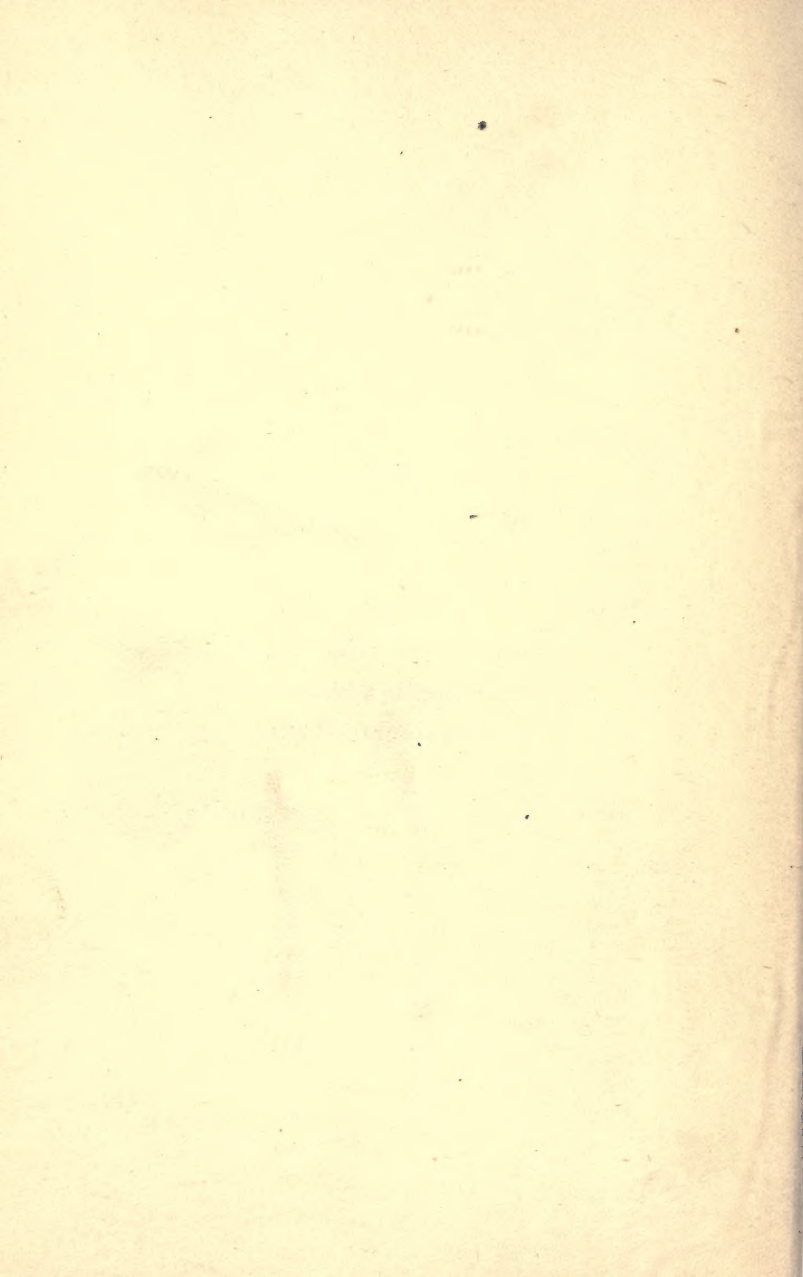
“ Gens à qui mon livre déplaît
Ce n'est pas pour vous qu'il est fait,
Pour Dieu contentez-vous des vôtres,
Et sans dire du mal du mien,
Soyez-en dégoûté fort bien,
Mais n'en dégoûtez pas les autres.”

—FRIAR JOHN OF ROUEN.

TO
W. S. CASE,

In token
of days on the Cricket Field
and hours in a Library,
these Essays are dedicated
by his friend

—THE AUTHOR.



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Most of the following essays appeared in their original form in the pages of "Literature." I am glad to be able to take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to the Proprietors and Editor of that paper for the hospitality afforded them in the first instance, and for permission to reprint them in the present.

FRIENDS THAT FAIL NOT.



I.

THE SHORT CUT OF COINCI-
DENCE.

I.

THE SHORT CUT OF COINCIDENCE.

A strange coincidence—to use a phrase
By which such things are settled nowadays.

—BYRON.

There are few persons, even among the calmest thinkers, who have not occasionally been startled into a vague yet thrilling half-credence in the supernatural by *coincidences* of so seemingly marvellous a character that, as *mere* coincidences, the intellect has been unable to receive them.

—EDGAR ALLAN POE, *The Mystery of Marie Roget*.

IT is a matter of common report that authors of a sluggish and sterile imagination are in the habit of searching for the plots of their novels in the pages of the *Police News*. Those who indulge in this somewhat disenchanting occupation must often have been struck by the fact that many of the strangest

and most thrilling occurrences in real life are not, for one reason or another, suited to fiction. The art of the story-teller, as of every artist, must consist in selecting the proper incidents and details from life and in presenting them in their due proportion. Otherwise, if the writer blindly accepts and records every subject, detail and situation which may come under his notice, he will end, perhaps, by being called true enough to fact, but certainly without being true enough to fiction. It may safely be stated that everyone, however uneventful his life may have been, has had at least one experience which, even when told quite baldly, makes a good after-dinner story. But in nine cases out of ten such experiences are not the materials of which the artist is in search. If he is wise, he smiles and shakes his head, and passes by on the other side.

One class of these personal experiences hinges on a coincidence. The coincidence in real life happens

not infrequently. If you invite a dozen of your friends to dinner, and lead the conversation to that subject, they will almost certainly supply you with half a dozen examples of coincidences which have actually occurred within their own knowledge—and that, even if they be men entirely devoid of imagination. But introduce one of these stories into a novel, and make your plot in any way depend upon it, and the reader will object. No matter how deftly you may clothe your history in the garb of style, the reader will still object to what he calls the improbable coincidence. Style will make us believe anything, except the improbable.

It may, perhaps, be not without interest if I here recount one or two of the most striking coincidences that have occurred within my own experience, and then attempt to discover *why* they are not, as I sorrowfully feel they are not, legitimate matter for fiction—stories made to my hand.

When I was up at Oxford, a great friend of mine, a well-known cricketer, used to wear a tie-pin to which there was attached something of a history. When he was ten years old, or thereabouts, his mother had given him a pair of sleeve-links, which she had had made out of two rare and curious stones, curiously set. They had originally been a pair of earrings—a wedding present—and when the fashion of earrings changed, she turned them to this account. My friend wore these sleeve-links for five or six years. At the end of that time, when travelling in Italy, he lost one of them. He then had the other made into a tie-pin, retaining, so far as possible, the curious gold setting of the stone. He wore it continually, and it was very familiar to us, his friends. It happened that one day during Eights' Week at Oxford, he and I were walking down to the river, to our College barge to see the races. He was wearing the pin when he started; but before we

were halfway down the path through the Meadows I noticed that the pin was gone.

It seemed hopeless to look for it; hopeless to try and stem the thick stream of people that was flowing down the path to the river, half an hour before the starting-gun was fired. However, as he valued the thing very highly for his mother's sake, he determined to turn back and search the path, in case the pin might have lain unnoticed amid the crowd of hurrying feet. As he worked his way back against the stream of people, his eyes on the ground, he was brought up by a violent collision with a man who was hurrying along towards the river.

He looked up, and, to his amazement, he saw his pin in the man's tie! He followed the stranger for a considerable time till he found an opportunity of speaking to him apart from the crowd. Then he taxed him with having found the pin he was wearing that day, and claimed it. But the truth was that

this man had found the sleeve-link which had been lost five years before in Italy, and, being unable to trace the owner and much pleased with the setting of the stone, he had had it made into a tie-pin, almost absolutely identical with that of my friend. The chances were, it is obvious, enormously against that. But it occurred. Why may not one use this occurrence as the basis for an artistic detective story?

The next case is still more uncanny. It happened to some people who were very well known in — shire. There were originally three maiden ladies who lived together. But one of them, whilst travelling in Spain, got herself married to a man who was described as "a queer sort of gipsy fellow." The marriage was denounced by her sisters as a *mésalliance*, and a rupture occurred. But when their sister and her husband both died and left a little boy of six years old to their charity, the two maiden ladies received him gladly and tried to

bring him up in the way he should go. He was an especial favorite of one, whom we will call his Aunt Mary. Bob Carreras, however (to give him a name), soon began to show that he had gipsy blood in his veins. He gave his aunts continual cause for uneasiness about him. From the time he was ten years old he was always running away for a few days, or else indulging in wild pranks very disconcerting to the old ladies. Finally, when he was about fifteen, he ran away altogether.

His Aunt Mary remained devoted to him. She spent large sums in trying to trace him, and she had the following advertisement put in all the English and Colonial papers. "If this should meet the eye of Bob Carreras let him return to his loving Aunt Mary and all will be forgiven and forgotten." The address was added.

Six months later, a boy of sixteen or so came up the drive which led to the house of these ladies.

He rang the bell, and said, to a new servant who answered the door :

“I am Bob Carreras. I want to see my Aunt Mary.”

He was shown into the drawing-room, but, when his supposed aunt came in, she was shocked to find that it was not her nephew who waited for her. Explanations ensued, and it appeared that this Bob Carreras had come over from Australia on seeing the advertisement. *His* mother and father had quarrelled with their family in England, and had recently died in Australia. From the advertisement he had concluded that, on hearing of his parents' death, his relations were willing to receive and adopt him, and in that hope he had returned to England. But he was the wrong Bob Carreras. His story, I may add, was on investigation found to be accurate.

But that is not the end. Years afterwards, the real nephew was found dying in poverty and destitu-

tion in London. His aunts went to him and nursed him through the last days of his illness.

"Why did you never come back to us?" they asked.
"Did you never see our advertisement?"

"Come back?" he answered. "*I did come back.* I came back one afternoon, six months after I ran away from you. But, as I came up the drive, the lights were lit in the drawing-room, and I saw you sitting talking to another young fellow like myself. And I shirked coming in. I just turned away. I was ashamed, or I was jealous perhaps. Anyway I couldn't find it in me to come into the house again, then."

Now, there is a true and a double-barrelled coincidence. Why should it be "unconvincing" in fiction?

At first it might seem plausible to assert outright that we do not care for coincidences in fiction now, and for the reason that we are bored with them.

The trick, it might be urged, has been repeated too often; it has been overdone. Coincidence, of one sort or another, is the favourite device of the early story-tellers and more barbarous romancers. We may take some of Shakespeare's plots if an instance is required. I am sufficiently old-fashioned not to despise Shakespeare. But he borrowed his plots, admittedly, from classical drama and mediæval romance. It will be found on reflection, however, that we must grant that though that device is a favourite with the early tellers of tales, and has been so much used since, it can hardly be said to be true that we are altogether weary of the use of coincidence, and will not admit it at all in our fiction to-day. The fact is not altogether so. The first experience, for instance, which I have related above, suggested a detective story. Why should it not be used for one? Nearly every detective story, when analysed will be found to depend upon one or more coinci-

dences—usually upon a whole series of them. The skeleton of nearly every such plot is simply this—A crime is committed; and suspicion rests upon the wrong person. Now, in order to secure that result, the author must avail himself of coincidences of time, of place, and of apparent motive. But—and this is the point where the experience quoted would fail if an attempt were made to treat it as the basis of a detective story—the quality of the story depends upon the success with which the bald fact of coincidence is concealed. The coincidence of the tie-pin, like so many natural products, is too crude; and, moreover, it is of the wrong sort. It would be introduced at the wrong stage of the development of the plot. It was also an incident that demanded immediate explanation. But the bald fact of coincidence must be concealed. For if a detective story is well written and well put together, it is not till we have got to the end, and then worked it backwards

and analysed it, that we see how we were misled by the disguised coincidences of time, place, and apparent motive, which caused the wrong person to be suspected. We do not know as we read that these *are* coincidences. It is not till we discover who is guilty, that we realise that the innocent have been suspected, through the coincidence of their having been at a certain place at a certain time with motives that could be misconstrued.

Take as an example the "Moonstone," one of the most finely constructed of all these stories. In that wonderful work there are some half-dozen people in the house when the stone disappears, and, with marvellous ingenuity, suspicion is made to fasten on one after the other in the most convincing way—but least convincingly on the servant-girl, Rosanna Spearman—and in her case the long arm of coincidence is stretched till the fingers can be observed moving the puppets.

It will, however, be generally admitted that when we know the trick of them, we get tired of detective stories as a class. That is to say that when we can analyse them as we read, and recognise the coincidences as they occur, and not only as we look back on the story, then this *genre* of fiction begins to pall.

Dr. Conan Doyle, following in the footsteps of Poe, has, indeed, treated the detective story from a different standpoint. But we get tired of Sherlock Holmes. And if the reason is sought, it proves to be because we feel the strain of the coincidence of his being always right, of his always selecting the important and the correct detail. The parodists hit on the weak point there.

There is another class of fiction, however, in which we tolerate, we look for, and we welcome coincidences.

This class consists of adventure-books, pure and simple. "Pure and simple" is an important quali-

fication. The truth is that in the novel of incident we look for excitement, and we gladly let ourselves be borne on the wings of unscientific imagination to the land of the unlikely and the unexpected. We read these books of adventure expecting and desiring to be surprised. We give the author a blank cheque on our credulity, and only ask in return that we may be excited. We are gratified to come across what is rare and strange—what we do not calculate will happen to *us*. In reading these books we willingly throw ourselves into the personality and position of the hero. We consider the story from his point of view. We put ourselves in his place and fight *his* battles o'er again. For the nonce, his dangers are our dangers, and his escapes, however wildly fortunate, however brought about, are our escapes. We share in them, we do not criticise. Is it not for that reason, and not merely due to the glamour of boyish reminiscence, that one can still read with pleasure

the account of the attack on the stockade built on the island by the shipwrecked family in "Masterman Ready"? Everyone remembers how the savages were making their last general assault, which was bound to be successful; and how, when they had already reached the bottom of the sloping pile of faggots by which they were to storm the stockade, "the yells and the reports of the muskets were drowned by a much louder report, followed by the crackling and breaking of the cocoa-nut trees, which made both parties start with surprise; another and another followed, the ground was ploughed up and the savages fell in numbers!" One can never resent the coincidence of that timely cannonade.

But with the novels which are novels of manners and character only, or that as well as novels of incident, the case seems to be different. These we read to criticise, and we resent—that is just the word—any great call on our credulity. There we look to find

life—average life—justly observed and fairly represented. But the general result of our experience is that coincidences, though they do in reality occasionally occur, are extraordinary. They cannot claim a necessary place in a picture of average life. I can think of several first-rate novels of the kind I have mentioned in which the use of coincidence seems to me a noticeable blemish.

Take first an instance from the novels of M. Zola—Zola, the great idealist, who so seldom presents to us a true picture of life that he has been playfully, paradoxically, called a realist—Zola, who sees life, steadily, but not whole, in the light of two or three preconceived ideas, which completely distort his vision, and then transfers to his canvas the facts so observed and idealistically interpreted. If, a hundred years hence, his books alone were to survive, our descendants on reading them would have an entirely erroneous, highly ideal conception of our age. They

would conceive us as having lived in an era of dull, morbid and sordid materialism, in which there was hardly a ray of hope and not a spark of humour. But to return to our muttons. In "*La bête humaine*" we find this so-called realist making enormous and continual demands on our credulity in order to secure a most improbable unity, or coincidence, of place and subject, and time and instrument. Of place, for, to quote from Mr. John Addington Symonds' analysis of that novel, "of the many tragic episodes to which the action of this poem of the railway gives rise, all are prepared at Paris or Havre in buildings attached to the railway stations, and all are consummated at a certain fatal point between the stopping places of Malaunay and Barentin. There is a tunnel which plays an important part in each catastrophe, and a way-side house of doom at Croix-de-Maufras. This house, in truth, has a right to claim equality with the palace of Atreus at Mycenæ. It is just as

mysterious and no less haunted by the Furies of an ancient crime. Guilty and innocent alike are drawn within its neighbourhood, to be involved in the mesh of destiny, which eventually entangles all the *dramatis personæ*." Of subject, which is murder, for it violates all sense of probability in life that a dozen of persons, more or less, should be either murderers or murdered, or both, when all of them exist in close relations through their common connection with one line of railway. Of time, for eighteen months suffice for the unfolding and termination of the whole series of homicidal tragedies. Of instrument—"the fatal knife, the present which Sévérine gave her husband in the opening scene, which he used to assassinate the President, which Sévérine meant should be the instrument of Rouband's death, and which Lantier finally plunged into her own throat." M. Zola presents this story to us without even the aid of a tolerable style; but he manages to blind us for a

moment to the absurdity of his situations by the glamour of the astonishing photographic minuteness of his imaginary details. So the book is read, but it is marred by the immense demand it makes upon our credulity.

Again, consider "The Sowers." Does not the coincidence of Paul and the wonderful Steinmetz, of all people in the world, finding on the Steppe the body of Sidney Bamborough—of all people in the world—strike one as a blemish in that very clever book? Or again, take Robert Louis Stevenson, that charming master of romance. I yield to no one in my admiration of "The Master of Ballantrae." But I believe that others besides myself must have felt the end of it jar somewhat on them, and that because of the coincidences by which the brother is brought to the brother's living grave, and by which Secundra Dass is made just too late to bring back more than one spark of life to the body of the unburied Master.

In a book of which the main interest lies in the development of character, we do not accept these tricks without a murmur. There is something unreal, something unpleasingly theatrical, about them here. Stevenson must have been conscious of that himself.

For let us turn to M. Victor Hugo's "*Les Travailleurs de la Mer*," and look at the last chapter of that novel, where the tide rises over Gilliatt on the rock, and the *Cashmere* gradually disappears in the distance until, after half a dozen pages, finally "*à l'instant où le navire s'efface à l'horizon, la tête disparut sous l'eau. Il n'y eut plus rien que la mer.*" What does Mr. Stevenson in his "Men and Books" say of that? "And when we have forgiven Gilliatt's prodigies of strength . . . what is to be said to his suicide, and how are we to condemn in adequate terms that unprincipled avidity after effect, which tells us that the sloop disappeared over the horizon and the head under the water, at one and

the same moment? Monsieur Hugo may say what he will, but we know better; we know very well that they did not: a thing like that raises up a despairing spirit of opposition in a man's readers; they give him the lie fiercely, as they read." Exactly. That is so true. And the reason is that in books of this sort we look to find life and the probabilities of average life reproduced, selected, indeed, and refined by the taste and art of the author, but still in substance convincingly reproduced. Now coincidences such as have been described are the reverse of ordinary. Their only interest lies in their being extraordinary; their only value in being true. One's first instinct on hearing them related is to disbelieve them; the next to investigate them. Reassured, perhaps, by the general veracity of the narrator, although a wit has warned us of the danger that may arise from the untrustworthiness of those who never lie, we may accept them, but they remain, as it were,

unclassified in our recorded experiences. They are out of the way ; we are equally surprised and shocked when anything of the sort occurs again. They may, in this sense, be true enough to life, but they are not true enough to fiction. For truth *is* stranger than fiction, and fiction ought not to be so strange as truth. The inexplicable is interesting in life simply because it is a fact and we know it to be a fact. It has no place in fiction, for in fiction we know that it is not a fact, and there the marvellous is only admissible and interesting so far as it is explained.

In real life there is, further, a smack of the uncanny about such coincidences, but the romance of their uncanniness evaporates when they are transferred to fiction. We resent then the improbability of the arrangement of events, and we are uneasily conscious of machine-made goods. A put-up job is suggested ; a craving for effect is imputed. The author, we complain, could and would have made things happen

otherwise if convenient. We feel that he is not treating us quite fairly; that he is availing himself of the long arm of coincidence (to use Mr. Haddon Chambers' classic phrase) to guide him by a short cut out of the intricate maze of inexplicable situations, into the heart of which his own ingenuity has led him. But a good work of fiction should give us the impression that so it must, not only that so it might have been. If a story, then, which we approach in a critical spirit depends on a coincidence, there is a lack of the inevitable in it which is fatal to the author's intention and to the reader's patience.

In the hands of certain novelists, who could be named, the use of this device is so little legitimate, that their romances have rather the air of melodramas. In genuine melodrama it is quite tolerable. For the requirements of the stage do undoubtedly demand a certain amount of licence in the use of coincidences. There the truth of what happens is vouched for over

the footlights by the living and moving persons of the actors. There, there is the evidence of our eyes to answer the call upon our credulity. We grant to melodrama the licences allowed to detective stories ; and to farce an even freer licence than that extended to the mere tale of adventure. But as in literature, so on the stage, we limit the use of coincidence. When we soar into the region of a higher art and deal with the tragic issues of life, then we no longer admit coincidences as affording a sufficient *motif* for the action of the play.

When Shakespere in writing *The Comedy of Errors* gives us a pure farce, we shrug our shoulders and cheerfully accept his demands upon our powers of belief. He asks for two Dromios as well as for two Antipholuses. Good ; he shall have them, and welcome, so he make good use of them. In a farce we do not seek a picture of life. We go outside of life for the love of laughter. But when, in

a tragedy, the tragic issue of events is brought about by coincidences, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, then we grow restive and resent the author's treatment of us. Romeo and Juliet had to die, we admit. They had to die, because they were children of the Montagus and Capulets, and yet loved one another. But in the play their death is made to depend upon a series of coincidences of time and undelivered letters. The human motive is silenced, and we suffer their death for no adequate human reason. A particular series of possible, though improbable, coincidences is made to solve the universal problem of the tragedy. If such things have happened in our own experience, it does not alter the question. There are many things in real life which have no place in literature. Otherwise, the school of French writers who merely go into a greengrocer's shop and catalogue the cabbages and turnips there would be a school of art. But the art of writing is to select and proportion material.

Every work of art should be complete in itself, exhibiting within its own limits a perfect proportion. The record of isolated personal experiences is misleading. Personal experiences are not literature or art, though some of them may be refined into it. Every book should be a whole; every personal experience is obviously but a part of the individual's life. The coincidences that occur in the whole of that individual's life, when viewed in the perspective of a multitude of facts, exhibit a very minute importance. That importance is immensely exaggerated by the recording of these coincidences in the narrow compass of a book or story which aims at being a study of character, a picture of life. Moreover, the book at once so far loses its claim to the universality which marks the works of more than a day. For, seen in proportion to our other experiences, coincidences, we determine, are exceptional. When they occur in real life we object to them; when they occur in fiction

we disbelieve them. There is nothing about them that seems inevitable. But it is the presentment of the inevitable action, the inevitable motive, the inevitable consequence, dressed, so far as may be, in the inevitable words—*le mot propre*—that constitutes, if one may be allowed to dogmatise so far, a work of art.

It is well, therefore, to beware of taking the short cut of coincidence.

II.

HUMOURS OF DICTIONARIES.

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HUMOURS OF DICTIONARIES.

"DICTIONARIES," wrote De Quincey, "are dull deceivers." But I cannot altogether accept that dictum. Many dictionaries doubtless are dull, and many are deceitful; but the dull are not usually deceitful, nor the deceitful dull. Perhaps the English Opium Eater was thinking, when he wrote, of his medical dictionary, a book which is now in my possession and from which, should a friend suffer from any aches or pain, I am wont to prescribe for him, feeling sure that what was good enough for De Quincey must be good enough for him. That Dictionary, however, though it may be

deceptive is certainly not dull. Next to the peerage it contains my favourite fiction. It was Stevenson, was it not, who, led astray by his love of words, declared that Dictionaries were his favourite reading? One must reach, I suppose, a very "literary" state of mind before one can fully sympathise with that choice. But even for us ordinary mortals, who have not the patience or the taste to toil after words, to seek style and ensue it, as Stevenson sought and toiled, even for us the phrase "dry as a dictionary" may seem not to ring quite true. For a dictionary is indeed not necessarily the driest of books.

Many years ago, when the worthy pedagogue whose weary task it was to teach me Greek warned me against using an English-Greek lexicon for my compositions, I, naturally, bought one. Almost the first occasion on which I used this curious work introduced me to the humour of dictionaries. For, in the midst of a frenzied endeavour to do a Greek

verse, I turned up the word "sad" in my lexicon, hoping to find some Greek word that would fit into my line. I looked up "sad" and the lexicon recommended me to see under "tristful." I looked up "tristful" and was referred to "melancholy." I looked up "melancholy" and was referred again to "grave." I looked up "grave" and it said, "*see sepulchre!*" Thus I found that there is always a soul of humour in things miscalled dull. There are, in fact, just three jokes in the great lexicon of Liddell and Scott. Or rather, there were. For in the last edition, the stupendous pun anent the explanation of the word *συκοφάντης* has, with miserable pusillanimity, been sacrificed. The derivation of this word as meaning "one who informed against persons exporting figs" is now no longer a "figment," but a "mere invention." Lest a similar fate should befall the other two jests, I will pass them over in silence.

The work of the "Great Lexicographer" himself teems with quiet fun. Did he not define a lexicographer as "a writer of dictionaries, a harmless drudge"? One may fancy, however, that the Hammersmith Semiramis (the phrase is Thackeray's—"take it not for mine") would hardly have appreciated that definition. And then there are a dozen other cases in which Dr. Johnson gave way to "capricious and humorous indulgence," as Boswell calls it. A ship, according to him, is a prison—with a chance of drowning, a point of view which Scott in the "Heart of Midlothian" has developed. "Prisoners," he says, "cannot stir abroad, but neither can the garrison of a besieged fort or the crew of a ship at sea; and they are not under a dispensation so desperate as either; for they may have as much food as they have money to buy, and are not obliged to work whether they have food or not." Johnson's definitions of Tory, Whig, Patron, Pension, Oats,

Excise, and Grub Street are too well known to need quotation. But I cannot deny myself the pleasure of repeating one:—

Pension.—An allowance made to any one without an equivalent. In England it is usually understood to mean pay given to a State hireling for treason to his country.

The humour here was, of course, intentional; but among my books there is a large French “Dixionary” which is a jest in sober earnest, something after the manner of the “English as She is Spoke,” which set us all laughing some years ago. I have said that it is large; and it was, indeed, for its size that I bought it one day, when I had grown tired of those smaller works which always omit the words you want, or translate them by the words which look most like them, regardless of meaning. Some authors are very eccentric in the words they omit. Napoleon had a dictionary, I believe, in which there was no “impossible”; but I have never seen it. . . . For two shillings, accord-

ingly, I bought the two mighty tomes in which the voluble Chambaud interpreted the French and English languages. His volubility is his chief charm. He is never content with the skimpy allowance of one word to translate another. He is never penny-father or muck-worm (*avare*) with his words; he empties the whole pepper-pot. He is not a mere ignoramus; for he knows a B from a bull's-foot (*Il ne fait ni A ni B*); nor must you suppose that he is intentionally a buffoon, jester, Merry-Andrew, Jack-pudding, or pickle-herring (*Buffon*), but there is with him a certain natural bubbling-up or estuation (*Bouillonnement*) of words which gives him a fatal tendency towards loquacity, dicacity, tittle-tattle, chit-chat, linguacity, gibble-gabble, polylogy, prittle-prattle (*Babil*). He is, you perceive, a prattle-basket; his tongue is well oiled and hung; he never falters or fumbles for a word (*a bon bec*), but will invent one rather than

cheat you of your allowance. Ask him the meaning of so light a word as *Bagatelle*, and he floods you with—"Trifle, trash, bawble, peppercorn, nidgeries, feather, punctilio, pimping-thing, piddling-business, fiddle-faddle, stuff, toy, fiddle-stick, fig, foolery, fingle-fangle, flim-flam, kickshaw, trinket."

You say "Benet," and he answers: "Simple, oafish, booby, looby, numskull, hobby, changeling, bull-head, ninny-hammer, noodle, nincompoop, put."

Truly, his tongue runs glibly or walks well! (*Il a la langue bien affilée*). If you try a word like "*abolition*," will he be content to say "*abolition*" and have done with it? Not at all. "*N'abandonnez pas les étriers*. Do not quit the stirrups, but spit in your hand and hold fast," you hear him cry, and he adds: "Abolition, extirpation, dissolution, rescision, circumduction, erasement, expunction, extinction, suppression, indemnity."

One wonders where and how he found some of

his wonderful words. Had he the invention of a Rabelais, an Urquhart, or a Shakespeare in this respect? Or did he use some slang dictionary which led him into reproducing a curious medley of "low, trivial, inglorious, mechanic, putid, vulgar, pelting, despicable, shabby, humble, downward, linsey-woolsey, scurril and scurvy words" (*bas*)? The humour of the matter it would be difficult to explain, but I fancy it lies in his skilful collocation and ordering of words. He will not merely beat you, but he will "bang, belabour, bethump, pommel, curry, drub, thwack, swaddle, and thrash you" too (*battre*). Perhaps, if one knew one's own language perfectly, with all its cant and obsolete words, this master of synonyms would not "charm, queme, enravish, and eyebite" one (*charmer*) as he does. A lady once asked Johnson how he came to define Pastern as the knee of a horse. Instead of making an elaborate explanation, as she expected, he at once

answered, "Ignorance, Madam, pure Ignorance." So, let me frankly confess, it may be due to my ignorance that Chambaud's words sound strange in my ears, and that in combination I find them ludicrous. But if that is so I boldly prefer my ignorance to philological omniscience. Omniscience, after all, must be fatal to one's sense of humour. There would be nothing funny in anything if one knew everything.

Besides the eccentricity of his words, some of our author's phrases are very instigated or lively (*animé*). Here are some that I have noted as I have gone carelessly through or nuddled along (*aller vite et négligemment*) this great work (for I was always a slow lazy—*un homme lent et paresseux*):—

Il se pendit bien et beau.—He hanged himself as round as a robin.

Une femme bise.—A brown or tawny woman, wainscot face.

Was he thinking of *Biscuit* or *Boisé*? The matter invites ingenuity in the elucidation! But he is

always hard on women. He has the face or forehead to say (*a l'audace*) that,

Les femmes sont long temps à s'attifer.—Women take a long time in setting off their heads!

Bruit.—Noise, ado, lerry, fup, clap, clatter, pudder, rent.

Caprice.—Whim, conundrum, maggot, crotch, crincum, phantastyr.

Il se fait beau garçon.—He is turning out a pickled youth.

Un affranchi.—A freedman, a libertine, a manumised, a colibert, a denizen.

Chagriner.—To grieve, to muzzle, to yearn, to wherret, to hyp.

Brilliant.—Lamping, showy, lucid, nitid, relucant, pageant.

Briser.—Flaw, shatter, flake, craze, mangle, mammock, comminute, refract.

C'est une franche Catin.—She is one of my cousins; she is one of my aunts; she is of the game; she is an arrant Betsy.

These things, indeed, are not so perfect of their kind as the “This girl have a beauty edge,” or the “Not so devil as he is black,” of Senhor Pedro Carolino’s “New Guide of the Conversation in Portuguese and English”; but at any rate they edulcorate (*adoucir*) the bitterness of the labour of looking out a word. They tell me there are better dictionaries; but, with all their faults, I love and

re-love (*rendre amour*) my shilling tomes and their author, not "for the care what we wrote him and for her typographical correction," but because after all "*c'est un bon enfant*," he is a good companion for a winter's evening, he is "a hearty cock, an arch-blade"!

III.

THE ENDINGS OF BOOKS.

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"Do you like ends?" the Captain of a sailing vessel enquired of the solitary passenger. As he waited for an answer he poised his knife above the small plum-duff before him and prepared to divide it between the passenger, the chief mate and himself.

"No," replied the passenger, not suspicious of guile.

"Well," replied the Captain as he cut the pudding in two, "me and my mate does!"

Now whatever the critic may say in defence of a tragic story, however much he may maintain that he does not insist on a happy ending to every story,

the British Public certainly echoes the sentiments of the Captain and his mate : " If you don't care about (happy) ends, me and my mate does ! "

From the critical point of view the last word on this matter has been said by Stevenson in the letter to Mr. J. M. Barrie, which is quoted in the editorial note to " The Weir of Hermiston." There he rallies Mr. Barrie on the " frightful unconscientiousness " he displays in writing the impossibly optimistic ending of " The Little Minister."

" That book," he says, " ought to have ended badly ; we all know it *did*, and we are infinitely grateful to you for the grace and good feeling with which you have lied about it. If you had told the truth, I for one could never have forgiven you. As you had conceived and written the earlier parts, the truth about the end though indisputably true to fact, would have been a lie, or what is worse, a discord in art. If you are going to make a book end badly, it must

end badly from the beginning. Now, your book began to end well. You let yourself fall in love with, and fondle, and smile at your puppets; once you had done that, your honour was committed—at the cost of truth to life you were bound to save them. It is the blot on ‘Richard Feverel,’ for instance; it begins to end well, and then tricks you, and ends ill. But in this case there is worse behind, for the ill ending does not inherently issue from the plot—the story had in fact ended well after the great last interview between Richard and Lucy—and the blind, illogical bullet which smashes all has no more to do between the boards than a fly has to do with a room into whose open window it comes buzzing. It might have so happened; it needed not; and unless needs must, we have no right to pain our readers.”

Stevenson indeed saw plainly enough that in the really great novel, regarded as a work of art, there must be an inevitableness and a uniformity of key

throughout. These are the very qualities which are lacking in all but a few English novels.

The fact is, the average English reader demands above all things a good story—*quocumque modo* a good story—and one which ends happily. And most even of our great writers have been content to tell their story, and, having told it, perfunctorily to wind it up with half-a-dozen weddings and the usual happiness for ever afterwards. The magazines, which are the best index of public taste, have a perfect mania for weddings. "The Light That Failed," which, from its beginning, had only one possible end, Mr. Rudyard Kipling was obliged to pervert into a happy issue for purposes of serial publication. Charlotte Brontë doubtless intended to kill M. Paul Emmanuel, but when she understood that the readers of "Villette" could not bear his death, she chose the better path; for, with her fine sense of art, she ended the book with a beautiful, ambiguous

paragraph and left the catastrophe to the good taste of her public. Both these were cases in which the whole conception tended towards the final catastrophe, but, of course, there is no virtue in a novel ending badly if "it needed not." As a rule, only that curious creature referred to now and again by certain reviewers as "the jaded novel reader," likes a novel to end badly. For him, perhaps, the books that end badly are the books that end well. He is, paradoxically, only pleased when he is disappointed. It may be he is best pleased when he gets a story which, like "The Lady and the Tiger," does not end at all. But there is another kind of book which is a book without end—namely, that which is intended to have a sequel. One may cite as an instance "Sylvie and Bruno," in which, however, the intention of a second part was detected by no reviewer and only by one small child.

There are probably many and complex reasons

for this love of happy endings. Perhaps it is only a very joyous nation, or a nation in a very joyous mood, that can appreciate tragedy to the extent of delighting in it. Such a nation was that of Athens in the days of her greatness: such a nation was ours in the days of Elizabeth. Now, we know, we take even our pleasures sadly, though not so sadly as we did one hundred years ago. Or perhaps the reason is that the public is, as a rule, more emotional and sympathetic than the critic, who judges books and derives intellectual pleasure from them only so far as they conform to the canons of art and universal truth. The public reads a book as a child listens to a story, with a full belief in the reality of it, and a practical, sympathetic desire for the happiness, in the end, of the characters in whose history they have been interested. They read, that is, with the same sense of illusion as that under which the gods from the gallery shout directions to the persecuted heroine in

a melodrama or shoot the unfortunate actor who is impersonating the villain, who, for them, *is* the villain. "Uncover," cried Sir Henry Irving when he was playing the part of Charles I., "Uncover in the presence of your King!" And a carpenter in the wings was observed obsequiously doffing his cap. Another reason that we are sometimes given is that people have troubles enough of their own without being harrowed by imaginary miseries. I do not think that explanation is quite so good as it sounds. Otherwise the sentiment of Dickens, to quote one instance, would not have been so popular. It is not, exactly, because people have so many sorrows and burdens of their own that they cannot bear the burden and sorrow of Hecuba. Rather are they pleased when their heroines and heroes are doomed, like themselves, to pass through times of trial and tribulation. For in this dispensation they find that touch of nature which links them with the great and

glorious ones of the earth or of their imagination. "He or she," they think of these heroes or heroines, "He or she is what I might easily have been," or, "This is the person that I, but for a little, might have met and loved and married. How true it is that I should have suffered then, even as I have suffered now, but all would have been well that ended well." And the author must make it otherwise at his peril! For thus, almost if not quite unconsciously, his favourite characters in a book become for a reader dear projections, ideal versions of himself; and for them, as for himself, he looks for a happy issue out of all afflictions, and insists upon its realisation with something of that persistent hope which marks his own following after the happiness which is always nearly, so nearly, within his own grasp.

But of endings, whether happy or other, how few there are which can claim to be, in themselves, things of beauty and a joy for ever! How few in which

the unity of purpose, of character, and of plot are perfectly conceived and perfectly concluded! One of the few is "Candide," which ends with that splendid *résumé* of Voltaire's ironical philosophy, "*Cela est bien dit—mais il faut cultiver notre jardin.*" Another book-ending, that lives in the memory as perfect in its way, is the chapter entitled "*L'herbe cache et la pluie efface,*" with which Victor Hugo concluded "*Les Misérables.*" It is impossible to forget Jean Valjean's epitaph:—

"Il dort. Quoique le sort fût pour lui bien étrange,
Il vivait. Il mourut quand il n'eut plus son ange:
La chose simplement d'elle-même arriva.
Comme la nuit se fait lorsque le jour s'en va."

And of modern French authors, M. Paul Bourget's "*Une Idylle Tragique*" is brought to a close with one of the most beautiful and appropriate pieces of melancholy prose that he has ever written. Mr. George Meredith, if in "Richard Feverel" he has shown us what to avoid, has given us elsewhere at

least one admirable ending. Could there be a more witty and delightful conclusion to "Evan Harrington" than the letter of the Countess de Saldar de Sancorvo to her sister Caroline? Laurence Sterne was a supreme artist in this matter. Certainly, after reading the "Sentimental Journey," one does feel that "one has been rambling on the sly with a discreditable parson," but it cannot be denied that, from the purely technical point of view, the last chapter and its final aposiopesis are not the least clever part of that marvellously clever book. But perhaps the most admirable conclusion ever penned is that of Plato's "Symposium."

Socrates, at a banquet given in Agathon's house, had been speaking of the emotion of love, and the subject had been discussed by some of the most brilliant men of the day at Athens, including Alcibiades, Aristophanes, and Agathon himself. At the end, so Plato concludes :

“Agathon arose in order that he might take his place on the couch by Socrates, when suddenly a band of revellers entered and spoiled the order of the banquet. Some one who was going out having left the door open, they had found their way in, and made themselves at home; great confusion ensued, and every one was compelled to drink large quantities of wine. Aristodemus said that Eryximachus, Phaedrus, and others went away—he himself fell asleep, and as the nights were long took a good rest: he was awakened towards daybreak by a crowing of cocks, and when he awoke the others were either asleep, or had gone away; there remained only Socrates, Aristophanes and Agathon, who were drinking out of a large goblet which they passed round, and Socrates was discoursing to them. Aristodemus did not hear the beginning of the discourse, and he was only half awake, but the chief thing which he remembered was Socrates trying to

make the other two to acknowledge that the genius of comedy was the same as that of tragedy, and that the true artist in tragedy was an artist in comedy also. To this they assented, being drowsy, and not quite following the argument. And first of all Aristophanes dropped off, then, when the day was already dawning, Agathon. Socrates, when he had laid them to sleep, rose to depart, Aristodemus, as his manner was, following him. At the Lyceum he took a bath, and passed the day as usual. In the evening he retired to rest at his own home."

IV.

YOGA AND THE YOGEE.

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OF the ancient Philosophies of India Yoga is one of the most interesting and ancient. It is acknowledged by missionaries to be an educational and religious influence which prepares the native mind for the acceptance of the great truths of Christianity. For its teaching exalts the intellect above the senses and insists upon the Unity of the Deity. But the tradition of a philosophy of this kind is mainly oral and the Yogee, or student of Yoga, should therefore above all things be careful to catch a good Guru. For, alas for the frailty of human nature, there are Gurus and Gurus. Every teacher of this philosophy takes unto himself the name of Guru, which is strictly

the title of the Great One—the First Teacher or the nearly perfected Being, temporarily in charge of a cycle—and not of the Brahmin or modern *purohit*, who assumes the name because he happens to have taught a few words of some *mantrams*. Thus there may be many who, calling themselves Gurus in this human world, deprive their confiding disciples of their wealth, but the real Guru is the one who can redress the sins and relieve the sorrows of his *chela*, or disciple. My Guru, when, in my Athenian search for something new, I once dabbled in the elements and toyed with the tenets of this philosophy, chanced to be, such was my good fortune, a very influential gentleman of Madras, who had made a journey to Thibet and learned many things from a Mahatma there. His credentials, it will be seen, are unimpeachable, and this or something like it was his teaching. To avoid misunderstanding it should be premised that these are instructions in the preliminary

elements only of Yoga, by which we may learn how to control the body through the mind, and thereby, when nature external and internal is subject to the intellect, arrive at the liberation of the soul and the manifestation of the divinity within us.

The young Yogee, so he taught me, should avoid associating with fools, he must not do any hard or laborious work, nor must he fast. But he should rise early and use cold water for his bath, unless it is positively injurious to his constitution. Rising then about 4.30 a.m. he must ascertain from which nostril his *Vayu*, or breath, is coming out, and then take his first step out of bed with the corresponding foot. After an interval of meditation he should bathe, and then he must assume his *Siddhasan* posture; wherein, squatting on his heels, with the eyes fixed upon the eyebrows, not shaking his body, but sitting straight—for you will naturally see that you cannot think very high thoughts with the chest in—the

student endeavours to concentrate his thoughts and collect his senses. It is true that this posture is slightly inconvenient at first, but after a few months of practice it will be found easy and comfortable, and then the Yogee will soon become expert in his duties. There is no other posture more sacred than this in the world.

The first real step is to ascertain the breath, and the student's chief aim should be to convert one breath into the other, according to its proper season. For of breaths there are three kinds. The *Eda Vayu* is that which comes in and goes out of the left nostril. Its time of circulation is on the first day of *Chandra* days and continues for three days; but on the fourth day of the moonlight days or *Sukalpash*, when the Yogee gets out of bed he should have the *Pingala*, or breath of the right nostril. Those who fail to obtain the *Eda Vayu* at the right moment will naturally be subject to uneasiness, sadness and other

disappointments. But the *Sukhmana* is the breath which circulates in both nostrils, and it is always a disturbing element. It is in the days of the *Eda Vayu*—unless indeed the *Akasa Tatwam* is in it, and then there is the devil to pay, as we shall see anon—that a man may successfully drink water, give in charity, perform marriages, embark on business, become a volunteer, or learn to ride on elephant-back, and do all such other acts of permanence and worldly bliss. But if you want to perform a cruel and intricate act, to eat a meal, visit royalty, ascend places above the sea level, borrow money, or digest hard food you will succeed to a certainty if you do these things in the days of *Pingala* breathing.

The object of gaining control of the breathing in this manner is to secure further control over the 72,000 nerve-centres of the body ; of which the chief are the twenty-four which surround the *Koondalini Sakti*, which is always sleeping or dormant and

generally coiled up like a snake. The student, to obtain the desired control, must observe his posture and sit quietly watching his breath, developing the ten virtues and gradually weaning himself from all worldly desires and family ties. If he commence the Yoga in his eighteenth year and continue it uninterrupted, at the end of six years he will be in possession of powers not describable, his wisdom will be much praiseworthy and by his fiftieth year he will succeed in accomplishing *Kechery Moodra*.

Next, as to Tatwams (of Beejams I will not here speak). There are five of them, and the worst of it is they are constantly changing. It is the Yogee's business to engage himself carefully at all times in finding out what particular Tatwam is in circulation at any given moment. Luckily there are some unmistakeable signs by which, like the Snark, they may be known. They may be distinguished, for instance, by counting or by watching the colour of the breath.

My Guru, however, suggests a way for finding out the Tatwam with comparative ease. "Close," he says, "close the two ears with the two thumbs, the two eyes with the two fore-fingers, the two nostrils with the two middle fingers, and the mouth with both the two ring and little fingers. If the student then sees yellow, he should know the Tatwam is *Prithivi*; if he sees white, it is *Jala*; red, *Agni*; green, *Vayu*; and black, *Akasatwam*.

But of what use, it may be asked, is this determination of the Tatwam? Partly, the answer comes, to ascertain what acts to perform at certain seasons. In *Jalatatwam*, for example, moveable works must be done, and in *Vayutatwam* all wicked works; in *Vayu* and *Agni Tatwams* the works undertaken are invariably unsuccessful. But the principal use of the knowledge of Tatwams is to avoid sickness by developing and applying the right ones.

Now let us suppose that the Yogee, by honest and

earnest application for the space of some years, has arrived at a fair proficiency in the control of the Three Breaths and in knowledge of the Five Tatwams. What should be his next step? All he now has to do is to curtail his breath, and then he will be able to see the future and foretell the coming events. Moreover, by this reduction in the length of his breath the Yogee will be able to prolong the period of his life much beyond the average duration.

“The result of this part of Yogee is to make man live long: health is the chief idea, the one goal of the Hatha Yogee. He is determined not to fall sick and he never does. He lives long; a hundred years is nothing to him: he is quite young and fresh when he is one hundred and fifty, without one hair turned grey.” So I learn from the writings of the Swâmi Vivekânanda.* Now listen to the promises of my Guru. It should be understood that the normal length of the breath is from ten to twelve *angulams*.

* Raja Yoga.

“If the Yogee succeeds in shortening the breath by one angulam, he will have freedom from desires, if by two, he will have pleasantness, if by three, wisdom, if by four, he will have the capacity to foretell, if by five, he will have long sight, if by six angulams he can fly in the skies, if by seven, he will be possessed of great physical strength, if by eight, he can perform the eight *sidhies*, if by nine, he will be possessed of the nine virtues and of wealth, if by ten, he will be able to project his soul into other bodies, if by eleven, he can see and commune with his own soul, and if by twelve angulams, he at once rises above the cravings of hunger and thirst. He who achieves this last stage has no motion ; he sits then in *Samadies*, when he can totally dispense with food and drink.” However, I gather that it is only the highly experienced, specially-trained Yogee who will derive much benefit from the free practice of this sort of abstinence.

The secret that underlies the question of breathing may be explained to the uninitiated as follows. The normal respiration of a human being consists of 21,600 breaths, and if a man, by not eating too much, or talking too fast or moving at all, or, in general, by not breathing too much, keeps exactly to this number he can live 120 years. And, of course, if he breathes less than the normal number of times his life will be prolonged proportionately beyond the normal limit. If, therefore, he does not breathe at all he will live for ever. It is thus that these aged men of the East persist.

Yet even for the most skilled and breathless Yogee it is not all plain sailing. For, just as, in a famous epic, "The bowsprit got mixed with the rudder sometimes," so the Vayus *will* sometimes get into Bepritswarams or abnormal states. Thus if one of them, be it Eda or Pingala, it matters not which, should endure for a whole night, the Yogee may

expect to die within three years. Again, Yogees who fail to see their eyebrows will die within nine days, and they who fail to see their noses will infallibly de cease within nine days, but ten days' respite is granted to people who, when they press both their eyes, fail to produce tears. Of course it is for the diligent Yogee, when he is given any of these warnings, carefully and at once to examine his Vayus and keep them in their proper order. Only so, but surely so, can he prevent all such common signs of death. But he does not stop here. For when by constant practice the Yogee has obtained perfect control over Vayus and Tatwams, he must tackle Moodras; and when he succeeds in Khechery Moodra he can live as many days, months or years as he likes, and he will have the power of floating in the sky like a balloon.

There, then, let us leave him; for I will not divulge the *culpam* (medicine), which if the Yogee takes for six months he "will become a second to *Brahaspati*

in the several qualities, and if he continue to take it for one year he will be godlike." Nor will I disclose the art of daily lengthening your tongue. Such elongation, after all, for most people is not a consummation to be desired. Yet without such increment there is no hope of success in reaching the *Seventh Chakram*; for unless the tongue reaches the palate and enters into the spot between the eyebrows there is no chance of making the *Dhyanam* and the *Samadhee*. And without the *Samadhee* how can a man see *Permatma*?

Perhaps the answer to this difficult dilemma lies in the statement, "For a prosperous thing are a great many obstacles. Therefore the Yogee should surmount all the difficulties that may present themselves to him and avoid him very intelligently."

That I take to be the conclusion of the whole matter, and that is what I have learned from my, perhaps too superficial, study of Yoga.

V

THE JOYS OF WRITING.

V.

THE JOYS OF WRITING.

Il jugea qu'il n'y avait point de métier au monde dont on dut être plus dégoûté.

—VOLTAIRE.

MUCH has been written of the pleasures of reading, but authors are curiously silent as to the joys of writing. Of the profits thereof, we hear, indeed, more than enough, and much, most writers will admit, that is misleading. But the truth will sometimes out; the best antidote I know to the *cacoethes scribendi* is the perusal of Mr. George Gissing's "New Grub Street." That book should cure any youthful enthusiast of the idea that he is likely to

earn a livelihood by writing books. Man cannot live by books alone, and journalism, though it may supply him with bread and butter, is a mere waste of time and a weakness of the flesh on the part of any one who starts, as most journalists do, either with a true love of literature or with the intention of making his mark as a man of letters.

Yet, apart from starvation and writer's cramp, there is joy in authorship. First and foremost are the pleasures of imagination, and the joy of the companionship of our own creations — little Melchizedeks, without father, without mother, who spring up unbidden in the brain and people with their presence and fill with the sound of their voices the room of our solitary and retired imagination. They are not dull, they are not tedious, these children of fantasy; they are much more lively than the living. These unsubstantial phantoms live and move and have their beings in the mind,

but they seem more real than the shadowy, colourless men and women of this ordinary, actual world. With this priceless gift of imagination we can, though plunged in sorrow and vexation of spirit, by an effort of will put our troubles from us and turn to the strange, necromantic joys of fancy, and with the imagined adventures, delights, sorrows, and loves of these imaginary folk fill up, for the time, the blank of our desolation. "Let us talk of realities," exclaimed Balzac, "let us discuss Eugénie Grandet." . . . So do many of us turn gratefully from the harsh trivialities of Life, or from the cruel logic of circumstance, turn from the Facts and the Reason that crush us, to Imagination, *their* soft, bright foe, *our* sweet Help. "Reason," writes Charlotte Brontë in one of the most vividly autobiographic passages in "Villette," "Reason is vindictive as a devil; for me she was always envenomed as a stepmother. If I have obeyed her it has chiefly

been with the obedience of fear, not of love. Long ago I should have died of her ill-usage ; her stint, her chill, her barren board, her icy bed, her savage, ceaseless blows ; but for the kinder Power who holds my secret and swears allegiance. Often has Reason turned me out by night, in midwinter, on cold snow, flinging for sustenance the gnawed bone dogs had forsaken ; sternly has she vowed her stores held nothing more for me—harshly denied my right to ask better things. . . . Then, looking up, have I seen in the sky a head amidst circling stars, of which the midmost and the brightest lent a ray sympathetic and attent. A spirit,* softer and better than Human Reason, has descended with quiet flight to the waste—bringing all round her a sphere of air borrowed of eternal summer ; bringing perfume of flowers which cannot fade—fragrance of trees whose fruit is life ; bringing breezes pure from a world

* Imagination.

whose day needs no sun to lighten it. My hunger has this good angel appeased with food, sweet and strange, gathered amongst gleamy angels, garnishing their dew-white harvest in the first fresh hour of a heavenly day; tenderly has she assuaged the insufferable tears which weep away life itself—kindly given rest to deadly weariness—generously lent hope and impulse to paralysed despair. Divine, compassionate, succourable influence! When I bend the knee to other than God, it shall be at thy white and winged feet, beautiful on mountain or on plain. Temples have been reared to the Sun—altars dedicated to the Moon. Oh! greater glory! To thee neither hands build nor lips consecrate; but hearts, through ages, are faithful to thy worship. A dwelling thou hast too wide for walls, too high for dome—a temple whose floors are space—rites whose mysteries transpire in presence, to the kindling, the harmony of worlds! Sovereign complete! Thou

hadst, for endurance, thy great army of martyrs ; for achievement, thy chosen band of worthies. Deity unquestioned, thine essence foils decay!" . . .

There is, too in this literary life joy, an intense, indefinable joy, when suddenly, as you turn to utter some trivial remark or bend down to light a spill for your pipe, an idea, an inspiration, as you are pleased to call it, flashes into your brain and illumines the darkness of your sterility. There is a joy when, in the throes of composition, you suddenly strike on the happy expression, the appropriate word or the new combination of words, and you are glad that a great phrase is born into the world ; there is a joy when you write " Finis " to a book, the satisfaction in the accomplished task as you complete the work which has been crushing you for months or years ; there is a joy of proof-sheets and an ineradicable delight in the handling of the first copies of your own new book ; there is a joy of reviews,

the bitter pleasure of comparing the contradictory verdicts of the critics, of discovering the reviewer's ignorance or tracing the cause of his spite; rarely, too rarely, there is the joy of acknowledging the debt you owe to his criticisms, the advantage your next edition will derive from his corrections, and the delight you feel in reading his well-written review. There is joy, again, rarer still and yet more precious, in the note from your publishers which informs you—ah, how seldom! in prose so bad, so business-like and yet so honey-sweet!—that a new edition has been called for, that a reprint is in contemplation.

But all these, it must be confessed, are pleasures that spring from the written or the unwritten word, the unformed or the formed. As to writing itself, the mechanical process of reducing thought to a more or less permanent form, most authors will confess that they have no pleasure in it, and in type-writing

still less. It is manual labour of the minutest, dreariest kind, and mental drudgery of the most nauseating. Who among those who are supposed to write at ease has not experienced the terrible sensation which the French so aptly name "*horreur de la plume*"? The only circumstance in which writing can be really pleasurable is when the imagination is untrammelled by the critical faculty and the writer is exalted by the vain conceit of his own cleverness or the overwhelming vehemence of his fantasies. Most authors find that this is what happens when they write late at night and they are content, therefore, to think or talk in the evening, and in the morning to turn out their tale of bricks. For after midnight a strange sort of fever seizes the brain; it is a form of intoxication, most exquisite, most fraudulent. Two o'clock in the morning courage may be the best and solidest form of human bravery, but the writing of that hour is apt

to be brilliant but unsteady work, hysterical, and not quite sane. It is the offspring of a feverish enthusiasm, born of a brain that has caught fire while the judgment sleeps. Like the bright conversation at a dinner-party, which owes its brightness to so large an extent to the hour and the champagne and the excitement engendered in the mind by light and warmth and beauty, it is, when reviewed next morning or in the cold greyness of after years, if not altogether stale and flat, certainly unprofitable. Amazingly clever as such work may seem to the happy writer at the moment, yet, when his judgment wakes and his brain is cool, he will too often have to acknowledge that what he has written bears something of the same relation to what he knows really to be good as dream-wit bears to real wit. For just as we sometimes dream that we have made some uncommonly smart repartee, a retort worthy of Talleyrand, a *mot* that is, at last, brilliantly,

astoundingly witty, which startles us even in our dream by its qualities of extraordinary sharpness and deep, penetrating humour, so that we wake proud, grateful and smiling, and then, when we recall that epoch-making joke, we find to our dismay, to our profound mortification, that it is really the most shamefully banal and stupid observation that ever was uttered, so after the midnight of literary intoxication there comes too often an awakening of bitterness and disillusion. Then the artist has to sit down and wearily to sift the gold, if there be any, from the dross of his overnight ideas. And through this process he will have to go whether he has written or only thought overnight. For the man of letters, then, joy cometh not in the morning. "The earliest pipe of half-awakened bards" is not altogether a joke; it is smoked, one may fancy, with the oppressive sense of a memory to be taxed and with the knowledge that the luxuriant products

of the overnight imagination must undergo the painful operation of critical pruning and paring. Tennyson would sit, after dinner, over his study fire, smoking strong tobacco from a new churchwarden, thinking the wonderful poetry he never wrote, the great fragmentary thoughts, the grand, unfinished sonorous verses, which he was far too genuine a poet to write. "Many thousands of fine lines," he once observed, "go up the chimney."

It is in the morning, then, that the artist records and elaborates in the cold light of his critical judgment the dazzling thoughts that leap to life, imperfect, unbidden, delusive, in his heated imagination o' nights. With infinite patience, with unwearied labour he deletes what was clever but untrue or true but inappropriate ; he tones down, then, the over-coloured images, he harmonizes what was discordant, elaborates what was undeveloped ; with unfailing self-denial and with unswerving devotion to art he pares

away all excrescences and reduces the whole to a correct proportion. It is in the morning, is it not? that it is easier to observe the great rule of life and art, "not too much."

But this is no light task; there is no joy in such a process, rather unceasing labour and much disgust, weariness often, and a need of courage, for which the artist is seldom given credit. The public thinks only of the freedom, the *bonhomie*, the holidays of a painter's life; of the slavery, the jealousies, and the disappointments of the studio it knows nothing. Still less does it understand that the artist's acutest sorrow is when he compares the masterpiece for which he is praised with the ideal that is ever before him but which he can never reach.

We remember Pope's extravagances, his pettinesses, his temper, his falsehoods, his profits, his influence, and even some of his poetry; but do we remember that every verse of that waspish rhymers

was finished with unstinted care, that every couplet was the product of incredible toil? Writers are, in truth, workers — manual labourers without the privileges of an artisan. The toil, but not the dignity or the encouragements, of manual labour is theirs. And what joy is there in their occupation? I would rather dig a patch of potatoes than write a short story, and far rather be an omnibus conductor than a novelist. (*"L'utile revenu du rasoir,"* sagely observed the Barber of Seville, *"est préférable aux vains honneurs de la plume."* . . .) My wages, so, would be higher and more certain, my responsibility and my respectability less irksome, my work much easier. For why in the name of common-sense, should a man be ashamed to dig? The attitude of the scribbler is far more contemptible than that of the digger; his profession far more absurd, his occupation much less wholesome. To get your nose near to the fresh-turned sods—that

is the thing. Wonderful how the noble toil of digging precludes the degrading luxury of thought, and promotes the natural desire for sleep together with an honest thirst for beer! Yes! That is the thing—to smell the new earth, not the stale ink; to see the wriggling worm, not the straggling hand o' write; to produce cereal stuffs or sound cabbages, not serial stuff and literary pabulum; to raise sweet flowers and blossoms for the dinner-table or the grave, not to provide a *mot* which may die as soon as it is printed, or, with more or less dessert, live upon the lips of men who dine. It must not be supposed that I am a believer in the "noble savage" theory of existence. For the noble savage, when you meet him in real life, is not impressively noble; he usually has a stomach-ache and is ready to trade his kingdom for a bottle of gin, and will barter his nobility for a box of pills. But the position of the so-called labourer in England is the most desirable

lot in life. The labourer, the working man (how and why has he arrogated to himself these titles? We are all labourers—all working men, we ought all to be "*dans la classe ouvrière*") can enjoy regular hours in the open air, regular exercise with a pick-axe or a spade; he is not hampered by any false standard of social appearances; his income in proportion to his necessary expenses is more than princely. And yet the whole aim and object of his ambition for himself or for his children is, madly enough, to rise, as he terms it, to some work at which he will not have to take off his coat. In the ignorance and innocence of his heart he actually envies the railway porter or the wretched City clerk, who wears a shabby top-hat and a shiny black tail-coat, sits on an office stool and has, as he thinks, a position to keep up, a respectability to maintain—a respectability which, to his infinite credit, he does actually as a rule succeed in maintaining—a City

clerk who works for hours which the so-called workman would refuse, in an office which the Local Government Board ought in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred to condemn, for a salary entirely out of proportion to the average wage of the ordinary artizan. But he calls it a *salary*. So it goes on in this false scale of social preferment. The man of letters is supposed to be free, not bound down to hours, times and seasons; he is credited with not taking off his coat to his work. All these suppositions are, unfortunately, incorrect. Why, then, do we go on writing? Why are we not all agricultural labourers? Alas! *Quisque suos patimur manes*; we are all haunted by the ghosts of our former follies, our old ambitions. We all have our pasts before us, and as for our futures, too many of us, alas! have left them behind. If we are sometimes tempted to curse our education and profession, we should, at least, remember with gratitude the

pleasures we owe to them—the delight of thought, the friendship of books, the joy of literary reminiscence, the pleasure of reading and the pleasure of being—however little—read. If we do so cheerfully we may be forgiven if occasionally we cry out that the joys of writing are illusory, and that the happiest author is he who thinks and talks and does not write—but of whom it is said that he could, if he tried. It is not, really, a pity that he doesn't. He ranks already among the greatest writers. For just as the heaviest fish are those that are lost, so the best books are those that remain unwritten. Their authors are too wise. They are looked up to by their friends and dreaded as men who didn't, but might.

VI.

THE TENDENCY OF THE MUSE.

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"We talk of food for the mind as of food for the body. Now a good book contains such food inexhaustible; it is provision for life and for the best part of us, yet how long most people would look at the best book before they would give the price of a large turbot for it!"

—JOHN RUSKIN.

"*Quo Musa tendis?*" asked Horace, and whither his Muse is going, as well as whether it will ever arrive, are questions which must often occur to the mind of a poet. And even for us, who are not poets, the tendency of the Muse is a matter which may possibly have an interest almost as personal, for we must often be constrained to pause and ask ourselves, what will be the result of this modern craze for teaching? What effect will Education (*seu Musa libentius audit*) have in the long run upon those who have been brought

up on the stimulating diet of the Board Schools? What will be the ultimate physiological result of feeding and cramming, as we do, our brains and the brains of other people's children with printed matter?

To prophesy has been termed the most gratuitous of all human errors. Let me make, therefore, no claim to be a prophet but merely put forward as a possibility, worthy, at least, of an afternoon's discussion by a Congress, the following suggestion as to the future developments of the human frame.

The amount of reading, of one sort or another, perpetrated by the present generation is enormous. But enormous as it is it will almost certainly be exceeded by succeeding generations. Now this vast consumption of printed matter must surely produce some change in the human organism. What, then, will that change be? Briefly and in all humility I suggest that our brains and bodies will undergo a rearrangement, and that the stomach of the fully-developed human

will be the brain. And the food of the future, the food from which we shall derive our physical as well as our intellectual life, will be, not Mellin's nor another, but books. The change is, indeed, already foreshadowed by the figures of our daily speech. Already we speak of gorging our intellects, of the craving for literature, of the hunger for books. Sir Walter Scott, it will be remembered, "browsed on a library." "We devour a book," Leigh Hunt observed, "just as we discuss a turkey or a chine." And Goldsmith, in that charming *jeu d'esprit*, the "Haunch of Venison," made an admirable *menu* of his famous brethren in art and letters.

"Not all on books their criticism waste,
The genius of a dish some justly taste
And eat their way to fame——"

wrote Edward Young, and proved himself, perhaps, more of a prophet than a satirist. For the love of reading, fostered as it is by halfpenny newspapers and penny poets, has become so absorbing that there

is no end to the possibilities it presents. Literature will soon cease to be a luxury, and will become a necessity, the staff of life. Printed matter will become the staple article of diet in the community. Food for the stomach, one may suppose, will then be regarded as an indulgence, as a thing over which the *dilettante* dawdles, to obtain which the genius denies himself. What we now consider mere meat will in that case occupy in our estimation the place that books hitherto have held. Hence it will happen that the Crabbes and Goldsmiths of a later century will be *gourmets* in search of a novel. *They* pawned their books to buy themselves food; *these* will part as reluctantly with their mutton-chops to raise money for the necessary literary fare. Food for the brain will be the main support of life, and men will almost live by print alone.

Men who eat will take the place that men who write occupy nowadays. They will be regarded with

a strange mixture of admiration and dislike, of envy and of contempt. They alone will wear long hair and rule the world. They will be called gentlemen of the fork. In the old days we hear of men who have gone without dinner, who have pinched their stomachs and bared their backs, to buy books, and we feel an unreasoning admiration for what we call the self-denials of George Borrow, Gerald Massey, or John Richard Green. They were really only indulging in their favourite virtue. In future it will be different. The paradox-monger will call forth an incredulous smile when he tells of some great and starving genius who has gone without a book to buy a meal; and the professional anecdotist will cap him brilliantly with the recollection of one who starved his brain to gratify the noble hunger of his stomach, and actually denied himself a penny newspaper in order to buy a penny bun. This anecdote he will dish up again in his volume of gastronomic reminiscences.

A new gluttony, of an intellectual kind not altogether unforeshadowed, will spring up; for people will indulge with almost stomachic delight in first editions, even as the gourmets of to-day revel in the first dish of green peas or spring strawberries. It will be creditable, then, to have spent your whole fortune on a single meal, as Dr. Edmund Castelle spent all his on a book. Louis XII. will at last receive his full meed of praise. For that royal and admirable martyr died of late hours in the forenoon; his grey hairs were brought with sorrow to the grave by his changing the hour of his breakfast from half-past nine to eleven, out of gallantry to his young English bride. Such devotion to breakfast will be deemed more wonderful even than his self-sacrifice.

Lucullus, also, will be quoted as a paragon, and Dr. Johnson will be admired for his appetite rather than his dictionary. The self-indulgent kings of those days—if there are such things—will die, not from

surfeits of lampreys, but from overdoses of Browning; and men of genius, not like Robert Greene from herrings and Rhenish wine, but from an injudicious mixing of Meredith and Maeterlinck. There will be a special significance in the butt of wine that rewards the laureate-eater. King William, it is recorded, taught Swift the Dutch way of cutting asparagus. We shall expect to find many instances of such princely patronage. Meanwhile free libraries will take the place of the workhouses, and tickets for Mudie's will be substituted for the soup tickets of modern charity and modern politics. De Quincey, if he were alive, would then at last understand "the Casuistry of Roman meals," and Charles Lamb's account of Roast Pork, that best of all human stories, will be rewritten in the light of later experience. For the Chong Pong in the version of that century will be detected in the very act of shutting up a novel in his library and burning his house down for

the sake of roasting an author, and some centuries after it will be said there arose a prodigious genius like Chung Pung, to establish a new era by showing that you can roast an author and cook an edition without burning down your house.

The newest eater of the latest dish will be the rage of the season. Then we shall ask diners to read with us, and no longer invite writers to dine. It will cause no surprise or suspicion of unworthiness if a great writer is "not regaled even with the Roman supper of a radish and an egg." It is the consumer of the egg who will be regaled with a volume of Gibbon. A new meaning, a new pathos will lend itself to Shakespeare's words, "He hath never fed of the dainties that are bred in a book ; he hath not eat paper, as it were ; he hath not drunk ink ; his intellect is not replenished."

There would not, perhaps, be much advantage to be sucked from this change. The world will be the

same as ever it was. Men of one meal will live on their reputations as men of one book do now. The stuffers and the stylists will be distinguished by the amount of their food as they now are by the number of their editions. Melodramatic mastication will carry it over dainty feeding. The —s and the —s will grow fat on innumerable beefsteaks, whilst the Jameses and Merediths will receive exquisite cups of bovril at the hands of admiring South Kensington. Critics will cut up books and make a full meal.

The New Woman no doubt will be distinguished by the voracity of her appetite. Women who think will, in those latter days, represent the dead level of respectable commonplace, whilst women who drink will be interviewed and admired. They will feed once a week at the Pie and Beer Club. Surely such a view of the tendency of the Muse offers a pleasant prospect, a pleasing future!

VII.

AS THE SMOKE VANISHETH.

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I.

A SMOKING PHILOSOPHER.

"Fumons philosophiquement
Promenons nous
Paisiblement
Rien faire est doux."

PAUL VERLAINE.

"An Indian never starts on an expedition without smoking over his council fire, and, though a man of white blood, I honour their customs in this particular, seeing that they are deliberate and wise."

J. FENNIMORE COOPER.—"The Last of the Mohicans."

SOME years ago in Paris I picked up from one of the bookstalls on the banks of the Seine a witty and pleasing treatise, entitled "*Traité théorique et pratique du Culottage des Pipes.*" The author's name is

modestly withheld, but the book is dedicated to the "friends of the pipe," and it takes for its motto "*la pipe c'est l'homme*." But, whatever his name, clearly the author was a gay dog and a learned. For there is great scope—is there not?—for a display both of learning and of wit in this weighty matter of choosing, colouring, and caking pipes. The writer professes, indeed, that, in spite of prolonged meditations and conscientious research, he has only succeeded in lifting a corner of the veil of smoke which hides from our straining eyes the mystery of the matter.

But how thorough those researches had been we may gather from the introductory chapter, wherein, after an eloquent defence of the pipe ("Why does one smoke so many cigars when beyond all question all serious smokers proclaim the superiority of the pipe? I do not speak of the cigarette, *ce joujou d'enfant, cette eau sucrée du tabac*"), he proceeds to pass in review the various kinds of pipes—*pipes en*

terre: marseillaises, belges, hollandaises, parisiennes; pipes en écume, en fausse écume, en porcelaine, en bois, en métal. Whilst dealing with this division of his subject, however, it is disappointing to find that our author is content with the bare mention of M. Gustave A——'s elementary treatise on Hypnocyapny, or the Art of Smoking in one's Sleep, 3 vols. folio — a work very suitable for family use and singularly moral. The habit of smoking in bed, it may be mentioned, is one of very respectable antiquity. "Others there be," writes Edward Gardiner, in "The Trials of Tobacco" (1600), "who spend whole daies, moneths, times and years in tobacco taking, not sparing to take it even in their bed." M. Rochefort, a Frenchman who travelled in England some fifty years later, informs us that men and women think that without tobacco one cannot live in England, and that children were provided with pipes and tobacco when they set out to school, and that there at the

accustomed hour every one laid aside his book to light his pipe—the master smoking with them, and teaching them how to hold their pipes and draw in the tobacco. “I have known several,” he adds, “who, not content with smoking in the day, went to bed with pipes in their mouths; others who have risen in the night, to light their pipes.” It is difficult, however, in reading M. Rochefort’s writings, not to suspect that his informant must have been on more than one occasion talking through his hat—to use an expression common to Molière and the Americans.

To return to our philosopher, who whatever his shortcomings clearly discourses on a subject which is next his heart. He is capable, one can judge from his enthusiasm, of having felt, if not of having written, those lines of passionate lament :

“ Mon cher Philippe,
J’ai perdu ma femme et j’ai cassé ma pipe.
Ah ! combien je regrette ma pipe ! ”

Or of having said, with that artist who lay dying in

the Quartier Latin, "My friend, I leave you my pipe and my wife. Take care of my pipe!" He does, in fact, remark that in his youthful days he was ignorant "*qu'on ne remplace pas une pipe comme on remplace une matresse.*" With this we may compare Mr. Rudyard Kipling's reflection "A woman is only a woman, but a good cigar is a smoke!"

At other times he deals in scientific theories as to the burning of pipes, or in practical advice as to the choice of meerschaums, with all the seriousness the subject demands. How would he have appreciated James Thomson's rhapsody:

"O beloved Meerschaum Pipe,
Cloud Compeller! Foam of the Sea
Whence rose Venus fair and free
On some Poet's reverie!"

He traces with care and loving minuteness the complete process of colouring a pipe (*marche générale du culottage*). Especially to be commended is that dictum of his that the device of leaving a dottel in a pipe should only be used in the extreme cases of

pipes "*rebelles à tout culottage*"; although, perhaps, an even wiser recommendation would be to put such pipes aside altogether. Without instancing other examples we must be content to say in general that he treats this branch of his subject with all the needful sympathy and, in spite of his modest protest that he is better skilled to wield the pipe than the pen, with all the needful learning. He tells us, too, with simple sincerity, of the dangers and difficulties, of the joys and sorrows, that await the enthusiastic colourist. With how grand and how melancholy an eloquence does he describe the pathos and the passion of the smoker's life! "Nothing in this world is stable," he cries like a later Heraclitus, "and the pipe which was once your joy and pride ends by succumbing to the force and flow of years; its qualities disappear or are transformed into defects; it grows old like a woman, like a mere mortal." Again, how penetrating is the vision of this philosopher, who could

see that "the greatest misfortune that can befall an honest man is—to break his pipe."

"On ne casse jamais une pipe brûlée,
Mais la pipe qu'on aimait tant!"

This is much more affecting than the death of Thomas Moore's beloved gazelle, or the dying kid of William Shenstone.

Ardent admirer as he is of a well-coloured clay, he would not have you misled by too exaggerated an appreciation of mere beauty. Attach yourself, he exclaims, to the qualities of a pipe, not to its mere outward appearance. Of the beauty of pipes one may say, as of the beauty of women, *le fond avant tout*. But he recognizes that, even as with women, so with pipes, the most experienced judge may be deceived. In that case, if in spite of all your care your pipe burns, his advice is tinged with the true dignity of philosophic calm. Trouble not deaf heaven, he says in effect, with your bootless cries, but com-

fort yourself with the consciousness of duty done. There are some pipes which seem predestined to be burned.

It is impossible to part with our smoking philosopher without quoting some of the golden maxims which adorn his penultimate chapter :—

(1). Do not smoke whilst you write; the second labour distracts from the first; you smoke your pipe irregularly, sometimes even let it go out.

(2). Do not give pet names to your pipe. They in no way help you to colour it.

(3). Light the whole surface of the tobacco, if possible with a coal. Believe me, a pipe will never be good if it is lit at a candle.

(4). Smoke slowly and regularly. A pipe well smoked is as good as a chronometer.

(5). Do not sacrifice convenience to appearances; appearances are always deceptive. (This is in accordance with the pseudo-Vergilian precept, *O fumose puer, nimium ne crede colori.*)

(6).
Un bon fumeur a pour principe
De fumer jusqu' au bout sa pipe.

And with that excellent maxim we might take leave of him. The only cause for regret or complaint that we have is that this gifted author, this *fumeur émérité*, was so completely enamoured of clay pipes that we are deprived of the instructive and profitable

lessons which he would otherwise have been able to give us on the subject of the briar, the meerschaum, or the cigar. Concerning cigars, indeed, he was content to quote Mabilie's couplet :

"Le cigare ne fumeras
Mais bien la pipe seulement."

His treatment of the cigarette had already prepared us for the narrowness, the lack of liberality in his views. So far from regarding it as "the perfect type of the perfect pleasure, for it is exquisite and leaves you unsatisfied," to quote the words of an English writer, I doubt whether he would have done more than grudgingly agree with him who declared that a cigarette was well enough whilst you are loading your pipe, or that it serves very well—when you are not smoking.

There are limits, then, even to the genius of this philosopher.

This pleasant Frenchman is not the only writer who

has endeavoured to systematize the art of smoking. The author of "The Cigar," published in 1827 a little volume with the terrifying title, "Every Night Book, or, Life after Dark," in which he describes places of resort in London. The book owes its fame now to Cruickshank's illustration; but the chapter on Divans also has its value. After remarking that in Spain and Holland tobacco obtained popularity much sooner than in England, but that we are now to all intents a smoking people, our author observes that it is marvellous, considering how many smoke in these our own days, how few smoke well. He is at pains to draw up "Twelve Golden Rules for Smokers," for there is, he says, "scarcely one accomplished glow-worm to be met with among a thousand whiffers of the weed." He was fond, you see, of vile phrases, and it is to be hoped he smoked better than he wrote. I do not propose to quote any but the twelfth of these rules of the craft. This precept must at the

time it was promulgated have seemed a hard saying, and even now may provoke some dissent, but most connoisseurs would assuredly approve.

“ You can never be looked upon as an accomplished glow-worm, or, what is a far more important consideration, you will never enjoy a cigar in perfection, if you adulterate its flavour on your palate with potations; strictly speaking, a man should never taste liquid of any description while smoking; but should you smoke half-a-dozen or a dozen cigars or so of an evening and suffer a tolerable interval to occur between your third and fourth, or sixth and seventh, a cup of Mocha or a glass of Rhenish is pleasant enough. After you have finished smoking, of course you may drink what you please. Should you be unable to smoke without drinking, take coffee or claret, but coffee is the better of the two: grog, beer, punch and most of the usual wines are improper, if you would fain have the taste of the delicious breath

of a true Havannah upon your palate ; they are fit only for those who are satisfied with a truss of plain-tain leaf or vile shag in a pipe of clay." So far as our author permits us to drink claret while we smoke, he is in agreement with the Governor of an American State, who used to defend the practice of smoking over wine by saying that though the claret was better without the cigar and the cigar better without the claret, yet both together were better than either separate. There is a Persian proverb, by the bye, that coffee without tobacco is like meat without salt. The combination of coffee with cigarettes is certainly admirable. In diplomatic circles this has long been recognised. Men, who according to Sir Henry Wotton's saying "go to lie abroad for the good of their country," were quick to recognise the fact, for whilst coffee may inspire them with something of the lucidity of Voltaire,* the use of tobacco certainly

* Voltaire attributed the clearness of his brain and style to the copious use of coffee. (Brillat Savarin, *Physiologie du goût*.)

soothes their nerves. They probably soon discovered, too, that the act of smoking lends an air of wisdom to the smoker.

“Do you see what a pretty contemplative air
I give to the company—pray do but note ’em,
You would think that the Wise Men of Greece were all there,
Or at least would suppose them the wise men of Gotham!
Says the Pipe to the Snuff-box.”

—COWPER.

Perhaps the most interesting occasion on which tobacco was ever lit in diplomatic history was the Diet at Frankfort, when Bismark, by means of “his famous lighted cigar,” as Vinche called it, asserted the equality of Prussia with Austria. Let him tell the story himself.

“In the sittings of the military commission, when Rochow was Prussian envoy, Austria alone smoked; Rochow, who was a passionate smoker, would also have gladly done so, but did not venture. When I came I did not see any reason against it, and asked for a light from the presiding State. This seemed to be regarded with astonishment and displeasure by

him and the other gentlemen. It was obviously an event for them. This time only Austria and Prussia smoked. But the others clearly held it so important that they sent home a report on the matter. Someone must have written about it in Berlin, as a question from the late King arrived. He did not smoke himself, and probably did not find the affair to his taste. It required much consideration at the smaller Courts, and for quite half a year only the two great Powers smoked. Then Schrenk, the Bavarian envoy, began to maintain the dignity of his position by smoking. The Saxon Nostitz would doubtless have liked to begin too, but I suppose he had not yet received permission from his minister. But when next time he saw Bothmer, the Hanoverian, allowed himself a cigar, he must have come to an understanding with his neighbour (he was a good Austrian and had sons in the Austrian army), for he brought out his pouch and lit up. There remained only the Wur-

temberger and the Darmstadter, and they did not smoke at all, but the honour and importance of their States required it, and so, on the following day the Wurtemberger really brought his cigar. I can see him with it now, a long, thin, yellow thing, the colour of rye-straw, and with sulky determination, as a sacrifice for his Swabian fatherland, he smoked at least half of it. Hesse-Darmstadt alone refrained."

Bismark must have enjoyed his tobacco more than usually in these circumstances, but the cigar which he enjoyed most in his life was smoked on another occasion. "The value of a cigar," he says, "can best be appreciated when it is the last you have and there is no chance of getting another. At Königsgratz I had only one cigar left in my pocket, which I had carefully guarded during the whole of the battle, as a miser guards his treasure. I painted in glowing colours in my mind the happy hour when I should enjoy it after the victory. But I had miscalculated,

A poor dragoon boy lay helpless, with both arms crushed, murmuring for something to refresh him. I had only my treasured cigar. I lighted it for him and placed it between his teeth. You should have seen the poor fellow's grateful smile! I never enjoyed a cigar so much as that one that I did not smoke."

II.

TOBACCO AND POETRY.

TOBACCO was termed by Tom Dermody "the blessed comforter of all poor bards." Poets, certainly, whether poor or not, from Raleigh to Rudyard Kipling, from Chapman to Charles Lamb, from Ben Jonson to Byron, from Thomson to Tennyson, have all with one consent smoked it lustily and praised it in terms of grateful enthusiasm.

Shakespere almost alone is silent on the subject; perhaps he was offended, as an actor and dramatist, by the custom of the young gallants who sprawled over the Elizabethan stage and smoked heavily beneath the noses of the performers. "To fume"

tobacco and "to drink" tobacco were the early phrases for smoking: it is probable therefore that the line in *Romeo and Juliet*, "Love is a smoke made with a fume of sighs," conveys a reference to the new-found habit. But it is scarcely permissible to infer from Shakespere's silence that he did not smoke. Neither Dryden nor Milton makes any noteworthy reference to tobacco, yet Dryden was, we know, a great snuff-taker, and was ridiculed for the habit in Buckingham's skit *The Rehearsal*; and Milton, when "fallen on evil days, on evil days when fallen," comforted himself with a modest pipe of Virginia at evening. I must think of Shakespere, then, as of Milton, as a quiet, unpretending smoker. I do not feel, however, that one can conscientiously go quite so far as Molière, who writes in *Don Juan*, "*Qui vit sans tabac n'est pas digne de vivre!*"

There are indeed certain loveable and excellent people whom one rather expects *not* to smoke. Such

a one, in my mind, was Spenser. And yet the poet of the Faëry Queen" makes a very beautiful reference to Tobacco :

"Into the woods thenceforth in haste she went
To seek for herbs that might him remedy,
For she of herbs had great intendment,
Taught of the nymph which from her infancy
Her nursed had in true nobility.
There, whether it divine Tobacco were
Or Panachea or Polygony,
She found and brought it to her patient dear,
Who all the while lay bleeding out his heart's blood near."

Tobacco, it may be noted, was long believed to have remarkable virtues as a herb of healing. It was regarded by enthusiasts as a veritable panacea, and the popular belief was firm that it would make a fat man thin and a thin man fat. Lilly, writing in 1590, speaks thus of it:

"Gather me balme and cooling violets
And of our holy herb Nicotian,
And bring with all pure honey from the hive
To heal the wound of my unhappy land."

Burton in the "Anatomie of Melancholy" proclaims it to be a "sovereign remedy to all diseases; a

virtuous herb ; “ but ” he adds, “ it is commonly abused by most men.” And again Barclay, the devout doctor, in his “ *Nepenthes*,” dealing with “ this happy and holy herbe, this most profitable plant,” in one of his poems calls it “ The hope of health, the fuel of our life.” “ There is no man,” he maintains, “ but may receive commoditie by the use of Tobacco. . . . There is such hostilitie between Tobacco and Melancholie, that it is the only medicament in the world ordained by nature to entertain good company, insomuch that it worketh never so well as when it is given from man to man as a pledge of friendshippe and amitie . . . I add further that amongst so many thousands who use and abuse Tobacco at all occasions without observation of any physical precept, there are very few found that can ascribe their Death to Tobacco, so that if Tobacco were used physically and with discretion there were no medicament in the world comparable to it.” Elsewhere he has a very beautiful

description of this "princesse" of all physical plants. "Tobacco hath a certaine mellifluous delicacy which deliteth the senses and spirits of man with a mindful oblivion, insomuch that it maketh and endureth the forgetting of all sorrows and miseries."

John Phillips, the author of that brilliant little mock heroic poem "The Splendid Shilling," has some lines in "Cyder" which aptly sum up the qualities claimed for Tobacco in those days :

"Nature's choice gift, whose acrimonious fume
Extracts superfluous juices and refines
The blood, distempered, from its noxious salts :
Friend to the spirits, which with vapours bland
It gently mitigates, companion fit
Of pleasantry and wine, nor to the bard
Unfriendly."

Nor to the Bard unfriendly! Even Spenser, we have seen, acknowledges its value. Perhaps we ought not to be surprised at Spenser's reference, for his relations with Sir Walter Raleigh are enough to account for it. May we not even imagine that he

was present, beneath the trees in the garden of that house near Youghal, when Sir Walter smoked the first pipe of tobacco that was ever lit in the British Isles? Sir Walter Raleigh was not, indeed, the first Englishman to smoke. He made smoking fashionable in England—all honour to him for this, and for the splendid enthusiasm with which he smoked to the very end—but to Mr. Ralph Lane, who was sent out by Raleigh as Governor of Virginia and returned to England in 1586, belongs the glory of having been the first English smoker. Some records have been preserved of Sir Walter's conversations with Queen Elizabeth on the properties of the singular new herb. Her Majesty laid a handsome wager with him that he could not ascertain the exact weight of smoke exuding from any given quantity that might be consumed. When he demonstrated that the difference between the weight of the ashes and the original quantity of tobacco gave the solution required,

the Queen paid the wager, observing that she had heard of many labourers in the fire who had turned their gold to smoke, but that he was probably the first adventurer who had turned smoke into gold. It is well known how the servant, whose duty it was to attend upon Raleigh with his tankard of ale, happened to come in while he was smoking and intent upon a book. Seeing the smoke issuing from his master's mouth and believing him to be actually on fire, the artless fellow threw over him the contents of the tankard and by his cries summoned the rest of the household to his assistance with buckets of water. Fortunately, the beer had extinguished Sir Walter's pipe, and he was spared the water. Not so well known is the story of his "*Kemble*" (or last pipe), which, says Aubrey, "he took a little before he went to the scaffold, and which some formal persons were scandalised at, but I think 'twas well and properly done to settle his spirits." On being

asked if it pleased him, Raleigh replied "Aye, 'tis indeed good, if a man might tarry by it."

But I find I am wandering into the history, or rather the anecdotage of Tobacco. Let us return to our poets. Molière, besides the too sweeping statement which has been cited above, has some fine phrases in praise of Tobacco. "Tobacco," he says, "inspires all those who take it with the sentiment of honour and of virtues," and again "*Il n'est rien d'égal au tabac; c'est la passion des honnêtes gens.*" Probably the most familiar French poem on the subject, however, is that by Charles Baudelaire, which is not at all an "evil flower" of his genius:

"Je suis la pipe d'un auteur.
On voit, à contempler ma mine,
D'Abyssinienne ou de Caprine,
Que mon maître est un grand fumeur.
Quand il est comblé de douleur
Je fume comme la chaumine
Où se prépare la cuisine
Pour le retour du laboureur.
J'enlace et je berce son âme
Dans le réseau mobile et bleu

Qui monte de ma bouche en feu,
Et je roule un puissant dictame
Qui charme son cœur et guérit
De ses fatigues son esprit."

Here we have a great poet declaiming the close connection between the Poet and his Pipe; a less great and an anonymous poet declares to us in the following lines the connection between his Pen and Tobacco :

"Je cherche et trouve par ma plume
Le Tabac que par jour je fume :
Car non content d'être rimeur
J'ai le talent d'être fumeur." *

The following stanza by Pigault Lebrun is worth quoting, if only for the extreme cleverness of the rhyme :

"Contre les chagrins de la vie
On crie ' Et ab hoc et ab hac,'
Moi, je me crois digne d'envie
Quand j'ai ma pipe et mon tabac."

We will take our leave of the French Poets after citing this charming sonnet of St. Amant, who here

* From a little anonymous volume entitled "*La Pipe Cassée.*"

describes to perfection the philosophy of the man who has learnt, in the words of Théophile Gautier, the art "*de fumer analytiquement sa pipe et son cigare*":

" Assis sur un fagot, une pipe à la main
 Tristement accoudé contre une cheminée,
 Les yeux fixés vers terre, et l'âme mutinée,
 Je songe aux cruautés de mon sort humain,
 L'espoir, qui me remet du jour au lendemain,
 Essaye à gagner temps sur ma peine obstinée,
 Et, me venant promettre une autre destinée,
 Me fait monter plus haut qu'un empereur romain.
 Mais à peine cette herbe est-elle mise en cendre,
 Qu'en mon premier état il me convient descendre,
 Et passer mes ennuies à redire souvent:
 Non, je ne trouve point beaucoup de différence
 De prendre du tabac à vivre d'espérance,
 Car l'un n'est que fumée et l'autre n'est que vent."

In modern Europe Germany is, *par excellence*, the country of smokers. Hood observed that it is not at all difficult to believe the story of a Prussian doctor who recommended a consumptive countryman to smoke *Virginia* tobacco, just as an English physician would advise a change of air.

" Ein starkes Bier, ein beizender Toback

— Und eine Madg im Putz, das ist nun mein Geschmack."

says Goethe in *Faust*, and he certainly expressed the point of view of many of his compatriots. I possess a little volume of German Drinking Songs which palpitate (in reviewers' slang) with enthusiasm for pipe and weed. The following stanzas from an address to his "*Liebe Pfeife*" show that the poet exalted his well-beloved pipe above the pleasures of friendship and the doubtful joys of love.

" Endlich hab 'ich sie gefunden
Die sich einzig für mich schicht
Und in allen trüben Stunden
Treu verharrend mich beglückt.

" Oft getauscht von Freund und Mädchen
Und durch Trennung oft betrübt
Halt ich jetzt am seidnen Fädchen
Sie, die meine Seele liebt.

" Die für mich alleine brennet
Die mir niemals widerspricht,
Eifersucht und stolz nicht kennet
Nicht aus Laune mit mir bricht ! "

Mr. Leland's delightful "Hans Breitmann Ballads" prove that though the German may change his country he does not change his taste :—

"When heavenly smoke is round my nose
 I veels all Gott-resigned
 Mit goot cigars in lofely rows
 No care ish on my mind.
 Id drills mein heart to finger dem
 Vhatefer be deir brand—
 Wherefer I finds smoke-work dere
 Ish Piper's Vaterland."

Hans' description of himself reminds one in some degree of that Count Herman in "The Ingoldsby Legends":

"A highly respectable man as a German
 Who smoked like a chimney and drank like a Merman."

The reproach of "smoking like a chimney," it is curious to find, is at least as old as Beaumont and Fletcher's

"I warrant you make chimnies of your faces" *

and in Bishop Hall, the Satirist, we find the same reproof:

"Nor half the smoke from all his chimney goes
 As one tobacco pipe drives thro' his nose."

References to Tobacco are rife, as might naturally be expected, in the pages of the Elizabethan writers.

* *Knight of the Burning Pestle.*

It is the one flaw in the universality of Shakespere's genius that he never praises it. "Shaconians" would argue, I suppose, that, because Bacon admits the virtues of tobacco and Shakespere does not, that therefore Shakespere was Bacon. However that may be, we have to look elsewhere for the *locus classicus* in seventeenth century drama. This is to be found in Chapman's *M. D'Olive*, Act II. Scene I; where D'Olive relates how he defended "this generous Tobacco, this gentleman's Saint and the soldier's idol"— "that excellent plant . . . that little strip of Nature wherein her whole workmanship is abridged," against the attacks of a little Puritanical weaver who

"Said 'twas a Pagan plant, a profane weed
And a most sinful smoke, that had no warrant
Out of the Word; invented, sure, by Sathan—"

D'Olive, for the defence, assigns to tobacco virtues kindred to those attributed by Falstaff to sack.
"Besides the excellent edge it gives a man's wit

. . . what variety of discourse it begets—what sparks of wit it yields ; it is a world to have.”

But “Rare Ben Jonson” supplies us with passages which can hardly take second place to the above. Besides his praise in prose, to which I shall presently refer, he gives us, in *The Alchemist*, a fine description of the ways and stock in trade of an honest tobacconist :

“This is my friend Abel, an honest fellow ;
He lets me have good Tobacco, and he does not
Sophisticate it with sock leaves or oil,
Nor washes it in muscadel and grains,
Nor bruises it in gravel under ground,
But keeps it in fine lily pots that, opened,
Smell like conserve of roses or French beans.
He has his maple block, his silver tongs,
Winchester pipes and fire of juniper ;—
A neat, spruce, honest fellow and no goldsmith.”

Some of the most pleasing songs of this period in praise of Tobacco are anonymous. Such is the well-known one from the “Maske of Flowers”

“Tobacco’s a Musician,
And in a pipe delighteth.”

Another very popular song of the time was “The

Indian Weed." There are, however, many variants of it. With some show of likelihood it has been ascribed to George Wither. Wither was one of the most unequal poets that ever wrote, reflecting in his poetry his charming, but unbalanced, character. He passes from the pitch of poetry to the depths of doggrel, from the tender music of his love songs, from the noble sentiments of some harmonious sea-piece or spiritual poem to the querulous complainings of fluent, undistinguished satire. This is what the satirist finds to say anent Tobacco, in the "Abuses Stript and Whipt":

"Some in their writings praise Tobacco much,
Yet 'tis almost a wonder to behold
How generally now both young and old
Suck on that foreign weed: for so they use it
Or rather, to speak wright so they abuse it
In too oft taking, that a man would think
It were more needful than their meal or drink."

"The Indian Weed," again, shows Wither, if Wither be indeed the author, in a moralising mood, but this time he moralises with a lighter touch:

"The Indian Weed withered quite
Green at noon, cut down at night
Shows thee decay.
All flesh is hay:
Thus, think, then drink tobacco.

"The pipe that is so lily-white
Shows thee to be a mortal wight,
And even such
Gone with a touch,
Thus, think, then drink tobacco.

"And when the smoke ascends on high
Think thou behold'st the vanity
Of worldly stuff
Gone with a puff,
Thus think, then drink tobacco.

"And when the pipe grows foul within
Think on thy soul defiled with sin,
And then the fire
It doth require:
Thus think, then drink tobacco.

"The ashes that are left behind
May serve to put thee still in mind
That unto dust
Return thou must
Thus think, then drink tobacco."

It would be tedious to enumerate all the references to Tobacco that occur in seventeenth century poetry. Apart from its intrinsic merits its novelty ensured it throughout this period very plentiful recognition in

literature. One of the best-known phrases on the matter is due to Samuel Rowlands, who in his "Knave of Clubs" (1611) wrote :

"Much victuals serves for gluttony
To fatten men like swine
And he's a frugal man indeed
That with a leaf can dine,
And needs no napkin for his hands
His fingers' ends to wipe,
He keeps his kitchen in his box
And roast meat in a pipe."

Then again there is a passage in Ford's "Lover's Melancholy" and the lines of Sir Robert Aytoun :

"Forsaken of all comforts but these two,
My faggot and my pipe, I sit to muse
On all my crosses, and almost excuse
The Heavens for dealing with me as they do,"

with their suggestion of Southey's

"One who suffered Fortune's hardest knocks,
Poor, and with none to tend on his grey hairs,
Yet has a friend in his tobacco-box."

The eighteenth century is the great period of snuff-taking. Snuff gave us our Augustan age of prose-writing ; snuff gave us the satire of Pope and Swift ; snuff stimulated the age of Wit and Reason

and inspired the elegance of the Beaus of Bath. But, with the decline of honest smoking in good society, the true spirit of romance and poetry fled. Our ingratitude to and harsh treatment of the land of Virginian tobacco lost us the American Colonies. A sneer from Pope, some doggrel verse from Fielding, some hearty but not very poetical praise from Cowper—this is all the poets of that time have to give us till Crabbe, who ushered in the new period of poetry, strikes the new note of the nineteenth century :

“Tobacco’s glorious fume all day we’ll share!”

England answered to that clarion call with no uncertain voice. She abandoned the snuff-box. Once more she smoked. The principles of Freedom, of the dignity of man and of Nature in man, of the beauty inherent in the simple affections of the human heart, found expression alike in word and deed. “Waverley” was written and the “Address

to Mr. Wilkinson's Spade"; Waterloo was won. And Byron gave voice to England's new appreciation of the cigar:

"Sublime Tobacco! which from East to West
Cheers the Tar's labour or the Turkman's rest;
Which on the Moslem's ottoman divides
His hours, and rivals opium and his brides;
Magnificent in Stamboul, but less grand
Tho' not less loved, in Wapping or the Strand;
Divine in hookas, glorious in a pipe
When tipped with amber, mellow, rich and ripe;
Like other charmers wooing the caress
More dazzlingly when daring in full dress,
Yet thy true lovers more admire by far
Thy naked beauties—Give me a cigar!"

In the lighter verse of Thomas Hood we find something of the same sentiment:

"Some sigh for this and that;
My wishes don't go far;
The world may wag at will
So I have my cigar."

England has never since gone back upon those words, and in spite of the Leagues of detractors, she never will. The very children in the nursery are taught the good example of Old King Cole, the merry old Soul, who—

"Called for his pipe and called for his bowl
And he called for his fiddlers three."

And they learn the secret of patience from Mother
Hubbard's Dog :

"She went to the butcher's to buy him some tripe
And when she came back he was smoking a pipe."

It remains to quote some of the later, greater
verses of nineteenth century poets. And yet
quotation in this case seems almost an imper-
tinence. Who does not know, what smoker worthy
of his tobacco has not read, Charles Lamb's Fare-
well to the "Plant Divine, of rarest virtue," for
whose sake, he said, he would do anything but
die?

"May the Babylonish curse
Straight confound my stammering verse,
If I can a passage see
In this word-perplexity,
Or a fit expression find
Or a language to my mind
(Still the phrase is wide or scant),
To take leave of thee, Great Plant!
Or in any terms relate

Half my love or half my hate ;
For I hate, yet love thee, so
That, whichever thing I show,
The plain truth will seem to be
A constrained hyperbolie,
And the passion to proceed
More from a mistress than a weed !

* * * * *

Thou in such a cloud dost bind us
That our worst foes cannot find us,
And ill fortune that would thwart us
Shoots at rovers shooting at us,
While each man, through thy heightening steam
Does like a smoking Etna seem
And all about us does express
(Fancy and wit in richest dress)
A Sicilian fruitfulness !”

The other great Ode of the century is, of course, by
Calverley: the ode that ends—

“Cats may have had their goose
Cooked by Tobacco-juice,
Still, why deny its use
Thoughtfully taken?
We’re not as tabbies are,
Smith take a fresh cigar !
Jones, the Tobacco Jar !
Here’s to thee, Bacon !”

What an admirable conclusion to all discussions!
Earlier in the ode he has excellently distinguished

the degrees of delight which tobacco affords according to the occasion of its consumption :

“ Sweet when the morn is grey,
Sweet when they’ve cleared away,
Lunch, and at close of day
Possibly sweetest.”

The fact that Tobacco can be taken at all times throughout the day is one of the great points of its superiority over all other forms of indulgence. A great and ardent smoker once told me that he derived the highest pleasure and the truest inspiration in troublesome matters from the pipe he smoked in his morning bath. For myself I am inclined to agree with Calverley, only I should refine upon his “possibly sweetest” by stating definitely that the best of all smokes is the pipe after a cigar, after a cigarette after dinner.

To smoke indeed before breakfast is a thing my tolerably hardy digestion boggles at. But one cannot, in these matters, judge others by oneself.

Bath-smokers have the support of De Quincey. "Being up then and stirring not long after the lark, what mischief did the Roman go about first? Nowadays he would have taken a pipe or a cigar. But alas for the ignorance of the poor human creatures! they had neither one nor the other. . . . Many a wild fellow in Rome, your Gracchi, Syllas, Catalines would not have played 'h—— and Tommy' in the way they did, if they could have soothed their angry stomachs with a cigar; a pipe has intercepted many an evil scheme."

It was then, it is so now; the view of De Quincey is confirmed by experience. Reader, gentle reader, has it ever fallen to your lot to be abroad in the country lanes on a summer's morning, ere ever the farm hands are stirring; when the fairies are spinning gossamer webs in the grass and the rising sun is rolling the white mists from the moors? Then the little birds ruffle their dewy wings and strike

the first notes of their melody, and the dripping trees, catching the first stray beams of the sun, smile through their tears. From under the tangled hedges that fringe the broad high road you catch the first sounds of stirring life. For beneath the hawthorn the tramp, that most inevitable of Anglo-Saxon types, is moving uneasily in his lair. He rouses himself with an oath scarce audible through his yawns; he half sits up, leans on one hand and stares uneasily about him. His other hand searches, half mechanically, his empty pockets in the dazed hope of finding there a stale crust for breakfast. But the poor dog has none. A dark cloud of anger passes over his countenance, but the storm of hatred for his fellow-men, for the society which has made him an outcast, passes as quickly as it came. A light of content succeeds to the darkness of woe. His hand comes forth from his pocket not empty. It holds with rough tenderness a short clay pipe,

black with years and nicotine. With his little finger he presses down the half-smoked contents of the bowl. He strikes a match and the thin blue smoke curls upward and mingles with the moving mists of dawn. The foul odour of his morning sacrifice taints the incense of the sweet flowers. Then he lies down again on his back and gazing up at the great vault of the free heavens, thanks "whatever gods there be" that he is no workman, the while he plucks the wonderful joys of rathe tobacco.

The late Mr. J. K. Stephen, one of the wittiest successors of Calverley, wrote anent Tobacco, besides the "Ballade of the Drowning Fusee," a light and very pleasing poem, of which I cannot choose but quote the opening stanza :

"A pipe's a merry madrigal
A stately sonnet a cigar,
The homely clay at close of day
A stanza to the evening star,
A cigarette a canzonette
Both amorous and musical."

Nor can I pass over Thackeray's

“Meanwhile I will smoke my canaster
And tippie my ale in the shade.”

Longfellow's “Hiawatha” takes us back to the beginning of things Nicotian.

“From the redstone of the quarry
With his hand he broke a fragment,
Moulded it into a pipe-head
Shaped and fashioned it with figures;
From the margin of the river
Took a long reed for a pipe-stem,
With its dark-green leaves upon it,
Filled the pipe with bark of willow,
With the bark of the red willow;
Breathed upon the neighbouring forest,
Made its great boughs chafe together,
Till in flame they burst and kindled;
And erect upon the mountains
Gitche Manito, the mighty,
Smoked the Calumet, the Peace-Pipe,
As a signal to the Nations!”

America has given us another poet of the weed in James Russell Lowell. “Tobacco,” he writes:

“Tobacco, sacred herb, though lowly,
Baffles old Time, the Tyrant, wholly
And makes him turn his hour-glass slowly.”

Last, but not least, Mr. W. E. Henley has declared

"If I were King my pipe should be Premier." He
has told us how—

"Over a Pipe the Angel of Conversation
Loosens with glee the tassels of his purse,"

and in yet another rondeau he counsels us—

"Oh, try the Weed!
It hangs thy starving dreams with brilliant bangles,
It coaxes into curves, it suavely wins
To rotund symmetry Life's knottiest angles;
Time's whirligig more comfortably spins
Under a sky its tender touch bespangles—
Oh, try the Weed!"

With this most profitable advice ringing in our
ears we must at length part company with the
Poets.

III.

TOBACCO AND PROSE.

"Me let the sound of great Tobacco's praise
A pitch above those love-sick poets raise."

—MICHAEL DRAYTON.

THE literature of tobacco is in itself quite extensive, and some years ago a bibliography of the subject was published in a stout quarto volume. Authors have usually been great smokers, and whilst many, as we have seen, have nobly hymned it in verse, many, also, have praised tobacco in prose.

Counterblasts certainly there have been, such as silver-tongued Sylvester's "Tobacco Battered and Pipes Shattered about their Eares that Idlely Idolize so Base and Barbarous a Weed," or King James'

fulmination, in which he denounced the custom of fuming or drinking tobacco as "loathsome to the eye, hateful to the nose, harmful to the brain, dangerous to the lungs, and in the black stinking fume thereof nearest resembling the horrid Stygian smoke of the pit that is bottomless."

"Tobacco," writes the royal pedant again, "is the lively image and pattern of Hell, for that it hath by allusion in it all the parts and vices of the world, whereby Hell may be gained. For, first, it is smoke ; so are all the vanities of the world. Secondly it delighteth them that take it ; so do all the pleasures of the world. Thirdly, it maketh men drunken and light in the head ; so do all the vanities of this world. Fourthly, he that taketh Tobacco saith that he cannot leave it, it doth bewitch ; even so the pleasures of the world make men loth to leave them." Cromwell, Regicide and Non-Smoker, believed, like King James, that growing tobacco in England was "thereby to

misuse and misemploy the soil of this kingdom," and he sent his troopers to trample down the growing crops wherever they found them. Another great English soldier, the Duke of Wellington, proved himself equally intolerant in this matter. His astounding general order is worth repeating once again :

"The Commander-in-Chief has been informed that the practice of smoking, by the use of pipes, cigars, and cheroots, has become prevalent among the officers of the army—which is not only in itself a species of intoxication, occasioned by the fumes of tobacco, but undoubtedly occasions drinking and tippling among those who acquire the habit. He therefore entreats the officers commanding regiments to prevent smoking in the mess rooms and in the adjoining apartments, and to discourage the practice among junior officers" !

Dean Swift, in one place, speaks of smoking as a "scurvy custom," and Lord Beaconsfield exclaimed

in one of his novels that "Tobacco is the tomb of love"—a charge which he might have supported by quoting such lines as Hood's

"The ardent flame of love
My bosom cannot char,
I smoke, but do not burn,
So I have my cigar."

But apart from these detractors, the roll of prose writers who have praised smoking is brilliant, and their laudations are generous. Ben Jonson's hero in *Every Man in his Humour* was ready "to affirm Tobacco, before any Prince in Europe, to be the most sovereign and precious weed that ever the earth tendered to the use of man. I have been in the Indies," he says, "where the herb grows, where neither myself nor a dozen gentlemen more of my knowledge have received the taste of any other nutriment in the world for the space of one and twenty weeks but the fume of this simple only. Therefore, it cannot be but 'tis most divine." This amazing testimony

reminds one of the Spanish proverb that a paper cigarette, a glass of fresh water, and the kiss of a pretty girl, will sustain a man for a day without eating.

Philosophers have always taken kindly to tobacco. Mr. Thomas Hobbes, of Malmesbury, smoked to excess and lived to the age of ninety-two. Sir Isaac Newton was also a great smoker, and it is recorded of him, as of another famous man, that one day, in a fit of philosophic abstraction, he used the finger of the lady he was courting as a pipe-stopper.

"Tobacco," Bacon admits, "no doubt hath power to lighten the body and to shake off uneasiness," and Locke also, speaking with the wisdom of a philosopher, declared that "Bread or Tobacco may be neglected; but reason at first recommends their trial and custom makes them pleasant." Burton more rapturously hailed tobacco as a cure for melancholie, "Tobacco—divine, rare, super-excellent tobacco—which goes far beyond all the panaceas, portable gold,

and philosophers' stones," whilst Carlyle welcomed it as an incentive to silence, as an inducement to a man "not to speak one word more than he has actually and veritably got to say." Thackeray agreed with him. "The pipe," he observes, "draws wisdom from the lips of the philosopher and shuts up the mouth of the foolish." Charles Lamb, on the other hand, who toiled after his prodigious power of smoking "as some men toil after virtue," took tobacco as a solvent of speech. "Marry—as the friendly vapour ascended, how his prattle would curl up sometimes with it! The ligaments which tongue-tied him were loosened and the stammerer proceeded statist!"

Both Carlyle and Thackeray wrote deliberate panegyrics of tobacco. "I vow and believe," says the latter, "that the cigar has been one of the great creature-comforts of my life, a kind companion, a gentle stimulant, an amiable anodyne, a cementer of friendship"; and Carlyle puts it in his characteristic way,

"Sedative, gently-soothing, gently-clarifying tobacco-smoke surely gives human intellect and insight the best chance they can have." Charles Kingsley's eulogy in "Westward Ho!" may also be added to the list. "There's no herb like it under the canopy of heaven. . . . When all things were made, none was made better than this, to be a lone man's companion, a bachelor's friend, a hungry man's food, a sad man's cordial, a wakeful man's sleep, a chilly man's fire."

What says the author of "Sam Slick, the Clock-maker"? "The Pipe is the poor man's friend; it calms the mind, soothes the temper, and makes a man patient under difficulties. It has made more good men, good husbands, kind masters, indulgent fathers than any other blessed thing on this universal earth."

What says Lord Lytton? "He who doth not smoke hath either known no great griefs or refuseth

himself the softest consolation next to that which comes from Heaven." And what Captain Marryat? "There is no composing draught like the draught through the tube of a pipe." The novelists, assuredly, believe in tobacco!

Of more recent writers, Stevenson spoke as a connoisseur when he declared "there are no such pipes to be smoked as those that follow a good day's march; the flavour of the tobacco is a thing to be remembered; it is so dry and aromatic, so full and so fine"; and J. M. Barrie has dealt with the humours of the subject in "My Lady Nicotine," from which, as from Barclay's "Nepenthes," the reader should learn "to continue with discretion in the practice of this precious plant."

In fiction it is interesting to observe how authors have noted the social significance of smoking. They have used tobacco as an index to character. Without a pipe Parson Adams is as inconceivable as my Uncle

Toby. For they both drew their philosophy from the same fount as the elder Mr. Weller.

"It was all one," says Tristram Shandy, "It was all one to my Uncle Toby—he smoked his pipe on with unvaried composure." In the same manner Fielding tells us that Parson Adams "immediately applied to his pipe, his constant friend and comfort in his afflictions, and leaning over the rails he devoted himself to meditation, assisted by the inspiring fumes of Tobacco."

And it is in this way that Washington Irving, in "Knickerbocker," notes the characteristic of a whole race, from which Mr. Kruger would seem to be no degenerate descendant. "The pipe is never from the mouth of the true-born Nederlander. It is his occupation in solitude, the relaxation of his gayer hours—his counsellor, his consoler, his joy, his pride ; in a word, he seems to think and breathe through his pipe."

“Are you for this diet, Sir?” asks Piscator in the “Complete Angler,” and Viator replies, “Yes, I am for one pipe of tobacco, and I perceive yours is very good by the smell.” “Sometimes,” writes the Spectator, “I smoke a pipe at Child’s, and, whilst I seem attentive to nothing but the *Postman*, overhear the conversation of every table in the room.” Or again, “I need not tell my readers that lighting a man’s pipe at the same candle is looked upon among brother smokers as an overture to conversation and friendship.” It is thus that manners are illustrated by tobacco, or by such scenes as that in “Cranford,” where Miss Matty fills Mr. Holbrook’s pipe. “After dinner a clay pipe was brought in and a spittoon; and, asking us to retire to another room where he would soon join us, if we disliked tobacco smoke, Mr. Holbrook presented his pipe to Miss Matty and requested her to fill the bowl. This was a compliment to a lady in his youth; but it was rather in-

appropriate to propose it as an honour to Miss Matty, who had been trained by her sister to hold smoking of every kind in utter abhorrence. But, if it was a shock to her refinement, it was also a gratification to her feelings to be thus selected; so she daintily stuffed strong tobacco into the pipe, and then withdrew."

Defoe, with his quick eye for telling details, gave us the scene in which "directed by Heaven, no doubt," Robinson Crusoe finds the chest containing tobacco and Bibles, "a cure both for soul and body." Scott occasionally, and Dickens continually, make use of tobacco. "'Do you always smoke arter you goes to bed, old cock?' inquired Mr. Weller of his landlord, when they had both retired for the night. 'Yes, I does, young bantam,' replied the cobbler." The reader who is on the look-out for literary plagiarisms may find food for reflection by comparing the passage in the "*Pickwick Papers*," where Sam Weller describes

his father's philosophy—" 'You are quite a philosopher, Sam,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'It runs in the family, I b'lieve, Sir,' replied Mr. Weller. 'My father's wery much in that line, now. If my mother-in-law blows him up, he whistles. She flies in a passion and breaks his pipe; he steps out and gets another. Then she screams very loud and falls into 'sterics; and he smokes wery comfortably till she comes to agin. That's Philosophy, Sir, a'nt it?'", with that in Marryat's "Jacob Faithful," where the hero says "His whole amusement was his pipe, and, as there is a certain indefinable link between smoking and philosophy, my father, by dint of smoking, had become a perfect philosopher." Quotations on tobacco might be multiplied from modern writers—Mulvaney and Sherlock Holmes, and the heroes of Ouida or of Wilkie Collins are all interesting on that subject, and the views they express are all very much in character.

Mr. George Meredith has made excellent use of

it in "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel," in the scene where tinker and ploughman meet as they seek shelter from the rain beneath a hedge. "From the weather there they fell upon the blessings of tobacco; how it was the poor man's friend, his company, his consolation, his comfort, his refuge at night, his first thought in the morning."

" 'Better than a wife,' chuckled the tinker. 'No curtain-lectures with a pipe. Your pipe a'nt a shrew.'

" 'Penny a day and there y'are primed! Better than wife? Ha! ha!' Speed-the-Plough continued.

" 'And ye can get rid of it, if ye wants for to, and when ye wants,' added the tinker.

" 'So ye can,' Speed-the-Plough took him up, 'so ye can. And doan't want for to. Leastways, t'other case. I means pipe.'

" 'And,' continued the tinker, comprehending him perfectly, 'it don't bring repentance after it.'

" 'Not nohow, master, it doan't. And'—Speed-

the-Plough cocked his eye—'it doan't eat up half the victuals, your pipe doan't.' "

Mr. H. S. Merriman in "The Sowers" describes Russian manners through the medium of the cigarette.

"The Russian peasant smokes his cigarette now. It is the first step and it does not cost him much. It is the dawn of Progress, the thin edge of the wedge, which will broaden out into Anarchy. The poor man who smokes a cigarette is sure to pass on to Socialistic opinions and troubles in the market-place. Witness the cigarette-smoking countries. Moreover, the same poor man is not a pleasant companion. He smokes a poor cigarette."

And again, "A Russian table-d'hôte is anything but hilarious in its tendency. A certain number of grave-faced gentlemen and a few broad-jowled ladies are visibly constrained by the force of circumstances to dine at the same table and hour. There is no pretence that any more sociable and neighbourly motive

has brought them together. Indeed, they each suspect the other of being a German or a Nihilist, or, worse still, a Government servant. They therefore sit as far apart as possible, and smoke cigarettes between and during the courses with that self-centred absorption which would be rude if it were not entirely satisfactory to the average Briton. The ladies have the same easy method of showing a desire for silence and reflection, in a country where nurses carrying infants usually smoke in the streets and where a dainty confectioner's assistant places her cigarette between her lips in order to leave her hands free for the service of the customers."

Ladies in England, and on the Continent generally, are not so advanced in this direction as their Russian sisters, and they have not hitherto figured largely in literature as smokers. It was not always thus. When tobacco was first introduced into Europe, when John Nicot wrote to Catherine de Medicis that this was

"a plant possessing extraordinary virtues," ladies took the hint. They smoked in Elizabeth's day, they smoked even at Elizabeth's court, and perhaps the good Queen fumed tobacco. In the eighteenth century many of the great ladies snuffed as freely as they swore. At the French Court, too, the daughters of Louis Quatorze were wise in their generation. The story runs that, when wearied by the etiquette of the Court circle, they were accustomed to celebrate mild orgies in their own apartments after supper. On one occasion, when the Dauphin had quitted the card-table at a very late hour and was surprised to hear a noise in their quarter of the Palace, he entered to ascertain its cause. He was surprised to find them engaged in smoking and he discovered that they had borrowed their pipes from the Officers of the Swiss Guard!—But, among ladies, the practice died out, and has only recently been revived. The ad-

vantages of it may be inferred from this passage in Carleton's "Tales of the Irish Peasantry": "Nancy would then sit down and light her *dhudeen*. Her wrath generally evaporated with the smoke of her pipe; for after she had sucked it until it emitted a shrill, bubbling sound, like that from a reed, her brows, which wore at other times an habitual frown, would gradually relax into a more benevolent expression."

VIII.

STREET CRIES, OLD AND NEW.

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“ THERE is nothing which more astonishes a foreigner and frights a country squire than the cries of London. My good friend, Sir Roger, often declares that he cannot get them out of his head or go to sleep for them the first week he is in town. On the contrary, Will Honeycomb calls them the ‘ *Ramage de la Ville* ’ and prefers them to the sounds of larks and nightingales, with all the musick of the fields and woods.” So wrote Mr. Addison in the *Spectator*, somewhat exaggerating, one would imagine, the astonishment of the foreigner. For from the “ Ho! who will exchange old lamps for new lamps ? ” which

was cried by Maghrabi the magician, "wandering about the highways and market streets of the capital," to the "Old shoes for some brooms" of Addison's day, or the "Ole clo'" of our own time, the hawker's trade has flourished in cities. Paris, as we shall see presently, was as famous as London for its cries. So, too, was Bologna.

It is in John Lydgate's fourteenth-century poem, "London Lackpenny," that we first find mention made of London trade cries. Fashionable tradesmen in those days, we gather, stood in front of their booths in Chepe (Cheapside) and bawled, "What d'ye lack?" "Master, what will you copen or buy?" just as the modern butcher bawls, "Come, Buy! Buy! Buy!" in the King's Road, Chelsea. References to street cries occur frequently in the Elizabethan drama. Morose, in Ben Jonson's *Silent Woman*, it will be remembered, protected his ears against the calls of the fish-wives, chimney-sweepers, and costard-

mongers by means of a "huge turban of night-caps." But "New mackerel" or "Buy my dish of great smelts" must have been the fishwives' cry against which he protected himself, not the "Buy my caller herrin'!" or "Mackerel, alive, alive oh!" of a later generation. The competition of the Stores has doubtless caused the cessation of many of the hawking trades whose cries have been preserved in Mr. Charles Hindley's "History of the Cries of London"; but the introduction of new commodities has brought in a few fresh ones. The "Ketch 'em alive oh, all alive!" of the vendor of fly-papers is, we fancy, an instance of this; and the "Best coal" of to-day has taken the place of the "Have you any wood to cleave?" of the sixteenth century. But already in Swift's day, on an April morning in 1709,

"The small-coal man was heard with cadence deep,
Till drowned in shriller notes of chimney-sweep;"

Of the old cries, of course, a few still survive, although

too often they are shorn of their ancient melody, that music of the streets which strangers were supposed to admire. We still hear the milkman's falsetto "Mi—eau, mi—eau, milk be—low maids, mi—eau, mi—eau!" still, but more rarely than of yore the muffin man proclaims o' Sundays, "Hot rolls! hot rolls! mufreens, mufreens!" Still, once in a while, the purveyor of strawberries or shrimps but never now, alas! of mulberries, sings, "They are all fresh to-day, all fresh to-day! Only a groat a pottle, full to the bottom!" For "groat," indeed, he substitutes "fourpence," but there is much virtue in a "pottle." The cry brings to remembrance Mr. Austin Dobson's charming little poem, "In Town," with its inevitable issue in a broken window and its momentary modern suggestion of Bernhardt's Hamlet:—

"Strawberries! fourpence a pottle!
Oh for the green of the lane!—
Ink gets dry in the bottle,
'Buzz' goes a fly on the pane!"

Then, again, "Wa—ter creas—es! Wa—ter creas—es! Buy my nice wa—ter creas—es!" survives along with "Lavender, sweet lavender! Who'll buy my sweet lavender, sweet blooming lavender?" and "Chick-weed! Here's my chick-weed and ground-sel for birds!" whilst Hogarth's Penny Pieman and the purveyor of "Hot spiced gingerbread! All hot, all hot!" (*Le Caldarroste* of Italy) live on the lips of the potato and chestnut vendors. There are other cries as persistent, such as "Any knives or scissors to gry-eende to-day? Big knives or little knives or scissors?" But, as a rule, the haste and rush of modern life, which promotes the clipping of the King's English, substitutes the paragraph for the leader and the snippet for the classic, tends also towards the curtailment of the street cry, if not to its utter extinction. Instead of "Great News! Extror—nary news! in the Lon—don Ga—zette!" the shrill-voiced urchin now yells, "Speshul! Extry

speshul!" or, "Winner!" instead of "Here's a right and true list of all the run—ning horses!" In place of "Do you want a—ny dogs' meat, cats' meat? Do you want a—ny dogs' meat?" or, "Buy my sound liver or lights for your cat!" the short, sharp, nasal, "'Smeat, 'smeat!" now charms the starving cats of Kensington. Other times, other manners. The "Southward ho!" or "Westward ho!" of the jolly Thames waterman has given place to the "Keb, sir?" of the crawling cabby or the "Benk! Benk! City, Benk, 'O—burn!" of the 'bus conductor. But that delightful patter-song, so full as it is of pagan reminiscences, "One a penny, two a penny, hot cross buns!" and the rest of it, still persists in a green and hale old age. "Clo! Ole clo!" is all that now survives of "Old clothes to sell? Any shoes, hats or old clothes?"

In my childhood I observed the deterioration of a cry in the person of one old man who used to

perambulate the streets with a wheelbarrow, crying "Any wine bot—tles? Any empty wine bottles?" As he grew older he grew more prosperous. Presently he appeared with a small boy wheeling a hand-cart and his cry was shortened to "Wine-bar! Any wine-bar?"

In his old age he rose to the ease and dignity of a pony-cart, which he drove himself, now and again mournfully bleating "Ba! Ba!" In the eighteenth century he would have said: "Any Flint Glass or broken Bottles for a poor man to-day?" The coster who now shouts "Cauli—flower!" would then have sung "Carrots, cabbages, fine savoys! Nice curious savoys!"

It must be confessed that these modern cries sound to our ears vulgar enough, but, as one looks through the pages of the old popular writers, one feels how the old street cries and old street slang are eloquent of a civilization that is past. It is just as well to

remember that the tags and phrases of one generation may be, and often are, the puzzle of the scholars of the next, and that they are valuable in proportion to the very slanginess of them. For such phrases as "Now we sha'n't be long," or "Let 'em all come," are racy of this London soil, and are coin struck by the lips of cockney clerks, and current in the City or the suburbs long before they pass into the general circulation of the music halls, by the aid of music wedded to very mortal, and very often to mortal bad, verse.

Practically every article of commerce was, as we have hinted, in early days in England carried and cried in the streets. A multitude of peripatetic merchants pervaded the streets and performed their business at the top of their voices, according to the method of the Stock Exchange or Bankers' Clearing House to-day. In less democratic days, under the Stuarts, people were even protected against the

nuisance of these nerve-wearing noises. Many of the cries were, however, in themselves very musical, and some hawkers, like the pastry man, commonly known as Colly-Molly-Puff, mentioned by Addison, not content with the traditional cries of their forefathers, invented particular songs and tunes of their own. These cries, indeed, were so distinct a feature of the popular life that they were frequently worked up into catches and ballads, as advertisements are now, imitated by actors on the stage, set to music by the popular composers, and illustrated by the cleverest black-and-white or coloured-print artists of the day. As an example of this let me quote a couple of stanzas from the charming "Roxburghe" ballad:—

"Hark how the cries in every street
Make lanes and allies ring;
With their goods and ware both nice and rare
All in a pleasant lofty strain.
Come, buy my gudgeons, fine and new,
Old clothes to change for earthen ware.
Come taste and try before you buy,

Here's dainty poplin pears.

Diddle, diddle, diddle, dumplings, oh!

Let none despise the merry, merry cries

Of famous London Town.

"Any old clothes, suits or coats.

Come buy my singing birds.

Oranges or lemons. Newcastle salmon.*

Come, buy my ropes of onions, ho!

Come, buy my sand, fine silver sand.

Two bunches a penny, turnips ho!

I'll change you pins for coney skins.

Maids, do you want any milk below?

Here's an express from Admiral Hawke,

The Admiral of renown!" etc.

But it was not only in England that this was the case. Guillaume de la Villeneuve, in his poem "*Les Crieries de Paris*," wrote very much in the same manner as this balladist. For in Paris, as in London, in the Middle Ages and later, all the trades were plied not in shops so much as in the streets or at open booths. It may, therefore, be not without interest if I quote here some of the old sixteenth-century cries of Paris drawn from a curious collection

* The Cockney pronunciation of Salmon is still very nearly a perfect rhyme to "lemon," just as the form *Ælfred*, in which modern historians endeavour to disguise our Alfred of the Cakes, exactly represents the present Cockney pronunciation of that name.

first published in 1520. Many of them refer to a state of morals and manners which we flatter ourselves has passed away, at any rate in its open ugliness, and they throw a lurid light on the city life of old Paris. Many others, however, are the cries of trades still plied by hawkers in the streets of London in this present year of grace.

Milk below.

“ Au matin, pour commencement
Je crie du lait pour les nourrices,
Pour nourrir les petits enfants,
Disant, ‘ *Ca tost, le pot, nourrices!* ’ ”

All hot.

“ Et moi, pour un tas de friands
Pour Gauthier, Guillaume et Michaud,
Tous les matins je vais crians :
Echaudez, gasteaux, pastez chaud! ”

Box o' lights.

“ Pour quelque peine que j'y mette,
D'enrichir je n'ai pas appris.
J'ai beau crier ‘ *Des allumettes!* ’
Car ils sont de trop petit prix.”

Matches, Maids! My picked, pointed matches!

(XVIII. Century).

Any Rabbit-skins?

“ Soit pour oui ou pour nannin
Quand veux parler aux chambrières,
Je vais criant ‘ *Peaux de lapin* ’
A moi venir n’arrester gueres?”

Acqua fresca!

“ *Qui veut de l'eau?* A chacun duyt,
C’est un des quatre elemens:
On n’en vend pas à un chacun—
Parquoi je n’en vends pas souvent!”

“ Bread and meat for the prisoners,” who depended for their daily sustenance on the charity of strangers, even as the prisoners in Morocco do to-day, was a well-known cry in the London streets. This is the Parisian version:—

“ *Aux prisonniers du Palais!*
On dit: les mots ne sont pas laids.
Aux prisonniers du Chastelet!
Qui sont en un lieu ord et laid.”

L’herbe verte.

“ *A ma belle herbe! à ma belle herbe!*
Pour ce que c’est toute gayeté;
Je ne la crie qu’en esté
A qui vendrai-je ma grosse herbe?”

Ropes of onions.

“ *Je vends oignons et eschalottes ;
Que l'on crie bons apétits ;
Mes acquests y sont petits,
Et si je fais petits bottes.*”

And so forth, through the whole gamut of cries, the poet puts in the hawker's mouth comments sometimes humorous, sometimes pious, sometimes full of good advice, and sometimes cynically explaining away his short measures. Such snatches of song, sung in the leisurely old days, must, one fancies, have been better than the short, raucous shouts of these times—the *Voyez la Patrie*, or *Paris Sport* of to-day. But much, of course, depends on the qualities of the hawker's voice. In the mere crying of a newspaper there is all the difference in the world between the shrill squealings of a Cockney or Glasgow lad and the soft notes of a Spanish boy. The scavenger in the “*Arabian Nights*” is said to sing so that the birds stop to listen to him. The Dustman of the London

vestries with his "Dust Ho!" may resemble his Arabian brother, and he may, like him, be a shrewd rogue and a witty, but I, at any rate, have failed to mark these qualities in him. But in London even the sparrows are arrant cockneys. . . . Mr. Addison's correspondent, then, had wisdom on the side of his humour when he said that, in the event of his obtaining the post of Comptroller-General of the London cries, it should be his care to "sweeten and mellow the voices of these itinerant tradesmen before they make their appearance in our streets, as also to accommodate their cries to their respective wares; and to take care in particular that those may not make the most noise who have the least to sell, which is very observable in the vendors of card-matches, to whom I cannot but apply that old proverb of "Much cry, but little wool."

IX.

CONCERNING UMBRELLAS.

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"And ombrifuge (Lord love you!) case o' rain."

—C. S. CALVERLEY.

"Pour étrenne on veut à l'envie
Du frais et du neuf et du beau,
Je dis que c'est un parapluie
Que l'on doit donner en *cas d'eau*" (cadeau).

"A SPECIES of gig umbrella, in colour like a faded leaf, except where a circular patch of a lively blue had been dexterously let in at the top." Such, with its battered brass nozzle and hooked handle and its habit of flapping like a great bird, was that tremendous instrument of great price and rarity—Mrs. Gamp's umbrella; such the famous machine which was destined, along with the brougham, the hansom,

and the sandwich, to take its name from the person with whom it was at first most intimately connected.

Everybody nowadays knows a "Gamp" when they see one, but not every one would know a "Robinson." That was the title by which the large and clumsy umbrella, kept in the halls of clubs and great houses, was known both in England and France for some time after the publication of "Robinson Crusoe." Defoe's hero, it will be remembered, informs us that in the construction of his umbrella he imitated those he had seen in Brazil, and adds, "I covered it with skins, the hair outwards, so that it cast off the rain like a pent-house, and kept off the sun so effectually that I could walk out in the hottest of the weather with greater advantage than I could before in the coolest."

From the "Gamp" of Dickens or the "Robinson" of Defoe to the neat modern umbrella, with its silk cover, iron stick and "paragon" frame, is a far cry.

So familiar, in these days, has the uncertainty of our climate made us with the umbrella habit, as one may call it, that the Englishman rarely goes out, even in the driest summer, without arming himself with his trusty weapon. You meet him abroad in the south of Europe still always thus equipped, and affording to the natives not infrequently considerable amusement. Life without his "brolly," as in moments of more effusive gratitude he affectionately terms it, would seem strange indeed to the modern Englishman. But it is only a little more than one hundred years ago that the umbrella, which we now consider an indispensable article of dress, was scarcely known in England, and was regarded as both ridiculous and effeminate. With something of the same feeling of contempt the Englishman of to-day would look upon the use of the fan, which is the ordinary accompaniment of the young Spanish and Italian dandies, in the Gardens of Venice or the Bull-ring of Seville.

In the same spirit did the French receive the fork when it was first introduced. It is to the refinement of Venice that modern civilisation owes the use of the fork, but when this invention was first seen in France moralists declared that it was indecent.

And yet the umbrella, in spite of the fact that its popularity in England is so recent, is an invention of great antiquity. It figures in the ancient sculptures of Egypt and Assyria; it was introduced into Greek comedy, affording Aristophanes food for fun, when he likened the movements of the ears of Demos to the opening and shutting of an umbrella, and again in the delightful scene in the *Birds*, where Peisthetairus sneaks about the stage plotting with Prometheus and hiding the while beneath the shade of a huge gamp from the observation and the wrath of Zeus. However, in Greece, the use of an umbrella or parasol—for it was as a sunshade that it was generally used—was regarded as a sign of effeminacy.

That, probably, is the meaning of it when Dionysus, the Wine-god, is represented with one of these symbols, as is frequently the case in vase-painting.

A symbol of effeminacy in the West, the umbrella was adopted universally in the East as an emblem of high dignity, and as one of the insignia of Royalty. In Hindu mythology Vishnu is represented as paying a visit to the infernal regions with an umbrella over his head. Even to this day "Lord of the Umbrella" and "Lord of the Twenty-four Umbrellas" figure among the titles of Eastern potentates. The King of Burma in 1855 described himself as reigning over all the great umbrella-wearing chiefs of the Eastern countries. The Western King with whom the idea of an umbrella is most closely associated is undoubtedly Louis Philippe. The "bourgeois King" always carried one, but his subjects failed to recognise in it an emblem of Royal dignity. The drawing of a king, with an umbrella held over his head by an

attendant, which has been discovered in an Anglo-Saxon manuscript of the tenth century, seems to show that the umbrella was known in England at that period and was regarded as possessing some social significance. But it certainly dropped out of use. References to it in our literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are very few and far between. But Swift's :

"The tucked-up sempstress walks with hasty strides
While streams run down her oiled umbrella's sides,"

and a well-known passage from Gay's "Trivia" show that umbrellas, though still rare weapons even in a lady's armoury, were used by women both as sunshades and to protect them from rain many years before they were adopted by men.

In 1752, however, we find Wolfe, the conqueror of Quebec, writing from Paris and praising the umbrella, as the traveller Coryat had praised it a century and a half before. "The people here," he says,

"use umbrellas in hot weather to defend them from the sun, and something of the same kind to secure them from snow and rain. I wonder a practice so useful is not introduced in England, where there are such frequent showers, and especially in the country, where they can be expanded without any inconveniency." Just at this very time the useful practice was being introduced into England, but it was only the dandies of the day, the macaronis, as they were called, who could at first venture to carry an umbrella. For by doing so men incurred the dislike of the mob, who saw in the habit nothing but an imitation of a type they detested—that of the mincing Frenchman. They detested the new-fangled foreign fashion with that hatred of things foreign and of foreigners so characteristic of an ignorant crowd. Doubtless, too, the charge of effeminacy was encouraged by the *esprit de corps* of the hackney coachmen and chairmen, who would not object to

a young dandy being afraid of the rain so much as to his wearing an umbrella and thereby avoiding the necessity of taking a coach. It is to one John Macdonald, a footman, that we owe the popularisation of the umbrella, if we are to believe the account of his life and travels which he has left us. "At this time (1787)" he says, "there were no umbrellas worn in London, except in noblemen's and gentlemen's houses, where there was a large one hung in the hall to hold over a lady or gentleman, if it rained, between the door and their carriage." When, therefore, he attempted to use the fine silk umbrella which he had brought from Spain, he was mobbed by a crowd who shouted at him, "What, Frenchman, why do you not get a coach?" and "Take care of your umbrella, Monsieur"—as who should say, "Where did you get that hat?" But his perseverance was rewarded. "Foreigners seeing me with my umbrella, one after another used theirs, then the English. Now it is

become a great trade in London and a very useful branch of business." All honour to the elegant lackey, but I am inclined to think that he exaggerates his share in the matter. For over thirty years Jonas Hanway, the famous traveller and philanthropist, had been practising the same habit. "When it rained a small *parapluie* defended his face and wig. . . . He was the first man who ventured to walk in the streets of London with an umbrella over his head. After carrying one near thirty years he saw them come into general use." So writes his biographer, John Pugh, and Jonas Hanway died in 1786. To him, therefore, the chief credit is due.

But before it was thoroughly naturalised—acclimatising it can hardly have required—the umbrella gave rise to some amusing incidents. The story is told of a countryman who, after paying a visit to a friend, was starting home in the rain, when his host ran after him and lent him an umbrella. Next day

the countryman came to return it. It was a fine spring day, but nevertheless he arrived with the umbrella spread. "It was a useful invention," he said as he gave it back, "and convenient enough for a man with a large house." "Why only for a man with a large house?" asked his friend. "Well, you see," replied the countryman, "I could not get the thing through my doorway—but you need not be alarmed—it was all right. For fear it should blow away, I tethered it in my garden!"

The use of the umbrella spread with much rapidity from London to the country towns. There was a tradition, we know, of the first that had ever been seen in Cranford: "The little boys mobbed it and called it a stick in petticoats." Many Spartans of the old school, however, preferred to get wet through with the rain to sheltering themselves under so unmanly a novelty—a dangerous novelty, too, they declared it to be, for it was calculated to interfere with the circulation

of the air through the streets! But there are always many very sensible men of the old school who scent disaster in every reform. Was it not said that the introduction of over-hand bowling would ruin cricket and did not many "very sensible men" prophecy that the removal of the arches of old London Bridge would cause such a rush of water as would surely prove dangerous? That point of view provoked the retort from Luttrell to Samuel Rogers that if some very sensible men had been attended to we should still be eating acorns. Fortunately the world has a practical way of ignoring these Cassandras. The umbrella habit was adopted in spite of them and it was found that people could still breathe in the streets—even on a rainy day. Very different in temper from these "sensible people" was M. Sainte-Beuve, who, when he had to fight a duel, appeared on the ground and prepared to fight with a pistol in one hand and an umbrella in the other. He was informed that this

was unusual, but he insisted on retaining the umbrella, for it was raining, and, as he observed, he did not in the least mind being shot but he did not see why he should get wet. The Chinese, who march into battle with umbrellas up, have somewhat corrected our ideas as to the peaceful nature of these instruments. Perhaps they were attempting to carry out the Cromwellian precept, "Keep your powder dry!" Or is it more probable that they had heard vaguely of the English method of using Chinese umbrellas as fire-screens?

It is very likely that the introduction of the "top," "silk," "chimney-pot," "plug," or "stove-pipe" hat, as it is variously described, which occurred about 1790, had a good deal to do with rendering the umbrella so necessary to modern life. The introducer of the top-hat, like the introducer of the umbrella, received little encouragement from the mob. In consequence of the uproar which ensued when first he appeared

in the streets of London, he was arrested for creating a disturbance ; brought up before the magistrates, and bound over in £500 to keep the peace. So jealous is society always of the leaders of fashion, and such is the fate of genius, whether it manifests itself in appreciation of hats or bicycles, of bloomers, automobiles or umbrellas!

X.

ON CURSES AND CONCERNING
OATHS.

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ON CURSES AND CONCERNING
OATHS.

"Swear not at all; for by thy curse
Thine enemy is none the worse."

—A. H. CLOUGH.

"A twopenny D——"

—DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

"Vous jurez, maître Jean!"

"C'est," répond l'autre, "pour aorner mon langage."

THE purpose of adorning one's speech or of relieving one's feelings, will account for most modern swearing. That is the light side of the matter, and this essay is not intended to deal with it from the serious or moral point of view. The merely condemnatory sense of imprecations, the desire for our enemies'

undoing and eternal punishment, which are occasionally expressed in the writings of the old Hebrew prophets and in the utterances of some modern preachers and poets, seem to me clearly unchristian and sinful to the highest degree.

But when the ordinary man gives vent to an oath, he does so to express his annoyance and to purge himself of irritation; he does not use a curse as a means, in itself, of revenge. The pleasure of the expletive lies, for him, not in the harm which it may do to his enemy but in the relief it affords to his own pent-up feelings. Exasperated beyond endurance by receiving his neighbour's umbrella in his eye he gladly grasps at the immediate relief offered by the opportunity of cursing the offender. He may really wish the man very well, in the ordinary course of life. But, if he does, his wishes are usually more difficult to express. The occasions of benediction are fewer and less obvious than those of malediction.

"Man never is, but always to be, blessed." He is much more frequently sworn at.

The value of an oath in such emergencies is that it very often acts as a sort of safety-valve to the temper, and lets off the irritation which might otherwise accumulate and find issue in a blow. The Chinese, they tell me, fight their duels in this way : the two combatants take part in an elaborately arranged contest of curses—with a time limit. There are some natures, however, which derive no solace from language ; deeds not words is their motto ; deeds not words their resource. Of such a kind was the North Country pitman, who, in reply to the effusive apology of the timid gentleman, who had accidentally trodden on his toe in getting into a railway carriage, said, after consideration : " Beg ma pardon ? What's the good o' tha—at to me ? Tak' tha—at." And " tha—at " was a blow in the face from Geordie's enormous fist. 'Twould have

been better had he sworn. Perfect self-restraint, indeed, would have been infinitely more desirable, but it may be argued, on the above grounds, that till mankind has reached a far higher stage of development than he has at present, till his conversation can really be conducted in terms of Yea and Nay, swearing has a certain place in an admittedly imperfect world—though you and I will avoid it.

Bad language does not, in fact, always imply viciousness or lack of self-restraint on the part of him who uses it. It has its purely decorative qualities. For very often, among the uneducated, it simply betrays an ignorance of words. It is said that the vocabulary of the lowest type of men in Liverpool does not exceed 500 words. There can be room in it for a very small variety of epithets. Hence it comes about that one ugly, long-suffering adjective has to do duty for the many and more precise ones which are at the command of more

cultivated conversationalists. Viewed thus, the use of this favourite word is really harmless. Whether it is a survival or not of the old Papist asseveration, "By'r Lady," matters nothing. The point is that it is used as a substitute for the more decorative words, which the speaker yearns for but cannot find. The same innocent desire for emphasis and ornament it was which prompted the enthusiastic "Tommies" to insert it between the syllables of their Hoo—ray.

Doubtless it is an ugly thing, an offence against manners as well as against morals, for a gentleman to interlard his conversation with oaths. "Let us assume every thing and every body to be d——d and proceed with the discussion." So, Sydney Smith related, he used to rebuke Lord Melbourne's characteristic habit of cursing every subject of conversation as it cropped up. But for certain purposes "langwidge" has its uses. Such at any rate would appear

to be the experience of drill sergeants and those whose duty consists in the licking of recruits into shape. The power of the tongue is a great and awesome thing, and intellectually it moves one's admiration to hear a man swear fluently and vigorously in any language.

I remember, some years ago, at the time of the "Unemployed" riots in London, witnessing a remarkable exhibition of this kind. The streets were blocked with well-fed demonstrators who were asking lugubriously what England was coming to when honest British working men like themselves had got no work to do. Round the corner of a street came a dashing brougham drawn by a handsome pair of horses. The coachman began to try to force his way through the crowd. In a moment his horses' heads were seized and he himself was roughly dragged from his box. Then the door of the carriage was flung open and out stepped a very dark, dapper

little man, smartly dressed and obviously a foreigner. Before he was out of the carriage he had begun to swear in a foreign tongue; by the time he had gained a footing in the road he was in the full swing of his condemnatory discourse. Surrounded by the surging crowd of roughs he stood there cursing them, gesticulating violently as he poured forth, for the space of several minutes, a flood of withering abuse, of most vehement anathemas. By degrees the torrent of his vituperation began to make way with the crowd. They understood not one single word; but the general drift of his remarks was unmistakeable. They understood *him*; they sympathised with him. He spoke to them as a brother, after their kind, as one of themselves, only with an eloquence beyond theirs. Their respect was gained, their sense of humour tickled, and their sympathy roused. •

Presently one of the leading demonstrators stepped politely forward and opened the door of the brougham.

The gentleman ceased from his harangue, bowed to the agitator, smiled upon the crowd and jumped back into his carriage. Room was made for the brougham to pass; a cheer was raised and he drove off amid enthusiasm, bowing and smiling. He had expressed in a more finished form the "Golly! Gosh! Darn!" of the angry American child.

I learnt afterwards that he was a member of the Spanish Embassy. He was certainly a fine exponent of a national accomplishment. "Our army swore terribly in Flanders," said Uncle Toby; but few nations, if any, can surpass the Spaniards in the language of vituperation. This, for them, is limited only by the extent of their knowledge, anatomical, geographical, astronomical or religious. It is so plentifully bestowed upon their animals—*un muletier à ce jeu vaut trois rois*—that oaths and imprecations seem to be considered the only language the dumb creation can understand. As actions are usually

suited to the words, the combination is remarkably effective.

The great oath of Spain, which ought never to be written or pronounced, and which practically forms the foundation of the language of the lower orders, is, according to Richard Ford, a most ancient remnant of the Phallic abjuration of the dreaded fascination of the evil eye. The word terminates in *ajo*. *Ajo*, by the bye, also means garlic, and is quite as often in Spanish mouths. It is in the termination of the word that the sting lies. Say *Caramba* and you are not offensive; you merely add a little seasoning to your words, and give a shotting to your discourse. Still more polite is the phrase "*Vaya Usted al demonio*"—Your Grace may go to the devil! Ford adds that the Spaniards, in addition to their imprecatory vegetable, have also adopted most of the gloomy Gothic oaths, which are imprecatory, and the Oriental, which are grossly sensual. They have also

a famous mathematical asseveration, which is not quotable.

A curious chapter in the history of oaths would be that dealing with the question of sham oaths. The device of disguising your blasphemy by the use of subtly theological oaths is a plan common to many ages and many countries. Socrates adopted it; a French king and an English king saved their consciences by it; in Italy at the present time they swear by pagan Gods—I suppose with the same object. Their “*Per Bacco!*” “*Per Diana!*” correspond to our “*By Jove!*” or our method of saying “*Dear me!*” or “*By Gad.*” St. Hugo, of Avalon, the great Bishop of Lincoln, adopted a similar device. “*By the Holy Nut,*” he used to say, “*Per Sanctam Nucem*” instead of “*Crucem;*” “*vice juramenti,*” Abbot Adam, his biographer, explains. And as with the Christian Saint so with the Greek Philosopher. Socrates swore by the dog, the goose and the plane-

tree, to avoid swearing by the gods. So, at least, the commentators say, and they call this style of asseveration a Rhadamanthine oath. For King Rhadamanthus the Good bade his subjects swear by the ram, the dog or the goose, but not to name the gods, and, obediently, his subjects swore by dogs and geese and cabbages. But that Socrates said *νῆ τὸν χῆνα* instead of *νῆ τοῦ Ζῆνα*, by the goose when he meant by the god, in order to enjoy the relief of swearing without incurring the sin may seem to some inconsistent with his character. His was not a conscience, it might be argued, so easily to be tricked. Besides, in several instances, Plato puts the words "By Zeus" or "By Hera" into his mouth, when he wishes to make a solemn asseveration. It may appear more likely, therefore, that Socrates' method of swearing by the dog and so forth was a mere trick of speech, a revival of an archaic form of oath which had arisen from some ancient kind of

animal worship, and gave a force and savour to his discourse without being in any way a make-shift blasphemy. In this sense, then, even his mouth was full of strange oaths.

It would be difficult to determine why imitation expletives are not altogether satisfying. It is certain that when a man says "Damn!" he does not, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, mean "eternally condemn." Theologians and grammarians may assure him that he does, but he knows perfectly well that he means nothing of the kind. Why, then, should it not suffice to use some other phrase? Perhaps it is that when a man feels the need of swearing at all he, like Hotspur, requires "a good, mouth-filling oath." Perhaps it is that he feels a certain sense of meanness in thus shirking the consequences of a general outbreak. Whatever the reason, it cannot be denied that there is little satisfaction to be got from exclaiming "Blue stomach!" (*Ventre*

Bleu for *de Dieu*) with the French king or "Odd's fish!" with the English. "*Nom de Dieu—d'une pipe, je voudrais dire—mais c'est la même chose,*" I once heard a witty French lady cry, all in one breath of apology and common-sense. She was right so far as her conscience was concerned, but I doubt if the relief would have been so great if she had said "*Pipe.*" In the "Stap my vitals!" of Fielding's heroes or the maritime oaths of Marryat, there is more refreshment, and it may be hazarded that they are more easily pardoned because they betoken an outburst more honest and less calculated. Be that as it may, few men will deny the benefit they derive from the occasional use of expletives and the expression at times of a sonorous, polychromatic, ornamental oath. Even ladies in High Life swore terribly in the eighteenth century, though the Abbess of Andouilletts found it necessary for her soul's health to divide responsibility with her Novice. The language of

Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, like that of Napoleon on certain historic occasions, was often that of the camp rather than of the court. Dr. Primrose, it will be remembered, has a word to say on this habit. Even to-day, it is rumoured, ladies sometimes chafe under the social restriction which forbids them to use the vigorous expressions of their husbands and great-grandmothers, and they are grateful to the man who on an emergency, such as the shutting of the gates on the Underground Railway, does their swearing for them. But it is, after all, only over little annoyances and the minor irritations of life that it is any relief to use "langwidge." There are some things and some thoughts which do lie too deep for swears. The breaking of a wine-glass or the losing of a train—these are things producing a sudden sense of annoyance that can be expressed; the breaking of a boot-lace, on the other hand, or the losing of a fortune, these are the greater tragedies

which strike us more deeply, and words may not bear the burden of our misery. There is no curse great enough for the occasion, and small curses on great occasions are but so much waste of strength and soul's health to no manner of purpose. So Mr. Shandy observed to Dr. Slop when he had mildly cursed Obadiah for causing him to cut his thumb. The passage is familiar, but I may be excused for quoting it, both because it is the *locus classicus* on swearing and because it exhibits Sterne at his best. Here he has worked up a scene with a skill in dramatic presentation far beyond the powers of Voltaire, and has thereby enormously heightened the effect of the satirical point—against the *odium theologicum*—which he has to make. And it is a point of satirical wit which Voltaire himself might have envied.

“I own it,” quoth Dr. Slop in answer to Mr. Shandy's remark quoted above.

"They are like sparrow-shot," quoth my Uncle Toby (suspending his whistling), "fired against a bastion."

"They serve," continued my father, "to stir the humours—but carry off none of their acrimony: for my own part I seldom swear or curse at all—I hold it bad: but if I fall into it by surprise, I generally retain so much presence of mind (Right, quoth my Uncle Toby) as to make it answer my purpose: that is, I swear on till I find myself easy. A wise and a just man, however, would always endeavour to proportion the vent given to these humours, not only to the degree of them stirring within himself, but to the size and ill-intent of the offence upon which they are to fall."

"Injuries come only from the heart," quoth my Uncle Toby.

"For this reason," continued my father, with the most Cervantic gravity, "I have the greatest veneration in the world for the gentleman, who, in distrust of his own discretion in this point, sat down and composed, that is, at his leisure, fit forms of swearing suitable to all cases, from the lowest to the highest form of provocation which could possibly happen to him:—which forms, being well considered by him, and such, moreover, as he could stand to, he kept ever by him on the chimney-piece, within his reach, ready for use."

"I never apprehended," replied Dr. Slop, "that such a thing was ever thought of—much less executed."

"I beg your pardon," answered my father, "I was reading, though not using, one of them to my brother Toby this morning, whilst he poured out the tea: 'tis here upon the shelf over my head:—but if I remember right, 'tis too violent for a cut of the thumb."

"Not at all," quoth Dr. Slop, "the devil take the fellow."

"Then," answered my father, "'tis much at your service, Dr. Slop, on condition that you read it aloud."

So, rising up and reaching down a form of excommunication

of the Church of Rome, a copy of which my father, who was curious in his collections, had procured out of the ledger-book of the Church of Rochester, writ by Ernulphus Bishop—with a most affected seriousness of look and voice, which might have cajoled Ernulphus himself—he put it into Dr. Slop's hands. Dr. Slop wrapt his thumb in the corner of his handkerchief, and, with a wry face, though without any suspicion, read aloud as follows:—my Uncle Toby whistling *Lillibullero* as loud as he could all the time. . . .”

Barham has given us a condensed account of that terrible curse in the well-known lines :

“The Cardinal rose with a dignified look,
 He called for his candle, his bell and his book !
 In holy anger and pious grief,
 He solemnly cursed that rascally thief !
 He cursed him at board, he cursed him in bed !
 From the sole of his foot, to the crown of his head ;
 He cursed him in sleeping, that every night
 He should dream of the devil and wake in a fright ;
 He cursed him in eating, he cursed him in drinking,
 He cursed him in coughing, in sneezing, in winking ;
 He cursed him in sitting, in standing, in lying ;
 He cursed him in walking, in riding, in flying,
 He cursed him in living, he cursed him in dying !
 Never was heard such a terrible curse !
 But what gave rise
 To no little surprise,
 Nobody seemed one penny the worse !”

Thus Dr. Slop, falling into Mr. Shandy's simple trap, proceeds to read that ferocious anathema and

is made to appear a very monster of theological intolerance, until at last my Uncle Toby, who has been taking the grotesque scene in sublime seriousness, thunderstruck at the revelation of the potentialities of human malediction, cries out in that self-revealing phrase, "Our armies swore terribly in Flanders, but nothing to this. For my own part, I could not have a heart to curse my dog so." And his innocent conviction that the conduct of our armies in Flanders formed the measure of all human experience is exquisitely justified by this application of their standard to the clerical curse.

Tristram has a word or two more to say anent Ernulphus, Bishop, and his oath. "Don't let us give ourselves a parcel of airs," he says, "and pretend that the oaths we make free with in this land of liberty of ours are our own; and, because we have the spirit to swear them, imagine that we have had the wit to invent them too. . . . I will undertake

to prove that all the oaths and imprecations which we have been puffing off upon the world for these two hundred and fifty years last past, as originals—except *St. Paul's thumb*, *God's flesh* and *God's fish*, which were oaths monarchical, and, considering who made them, not much amiss; and as King's oaths, it is not much matter whether they were fish or flesh;—else, I say, there is not an oath, or at least a curse amongst them, which has not been copied over and over again out of Ernulphus a thousand times; but, like all other copies, how infinitely short of the force and spirit of the original! . . . There is an orientality in his we cannot rise up to; besides, he is more copious in his invention—possesses more of the excellence of a swearer—had such a thorough knowledge of the human frame, its membranes, nerves, ligaments, knittings of the joints, and articulations, that when Ernulphus cursed no part escaped him. 'Tis true there is something of a *hard-*

ness in his manner, and, as in Michael Angelo, a want of grace—but then there is such a greatness of gusto!

“My father, who generally looked upon everything in a light very different from all mankind, would, after all, never allow this to be an original. He considered rather Ernulphus’ anathema as an institute of swearing, in which, as he suspected, upon the decline of swearing in some milder pontificate, Ernulphus, by order of the succeeding Pope, had, with great learning and diligence, collected together all the laws of it; for the same reason that Justinian, in the decline of the empire, had ordered his chancellor, Tribonian, to collect the Roman or civil laws altogether into one code or digest, lest, through the rust of time, and the fatality of all things committed to oral tradition, they should be lost to the world for ever.

“For this reason my father would often affirm there

was not an oath, from the great and tremendous oaths of William the Conqueror ('By the splendour of God!') down to the lowest oath of a scavenger ('Damn your eyes!') which was not to be found in Ernulphus. 'In short,' he would add, 'I defy a man to swear out of it.'" And indeed, as we read Ernulphus' curse, it does seem that it would require something of the inventive genius of so profound a casuist as the Bantam in "Richard Feverel," to succeed in swearing out of it.

"You swore to 't," the farmer vociferated afresh.

"Noa!" said the Bantam, ducking his poll, "Noa!" he repeated in a lower note: and then, while a sombre grin betokening idiotic enjoyment of his profound casuistical quibble worked at his jaw:—

"*Not up'n oath!*" he added, with a twitch of the shoulder and an angular jerk of the elbow.

It is impossible to dismiss this subject of swearing without a reference to Lord Scamperdale, the M.F.H. with whom Mr. Sponge came in contact on his "Sporting Tour."

"D——n you, Mr. Brown Boots!" continued his lordship,

looking at Sponge as if he would eat him. . . . "See, Sir! You've lost us our fox, sir—*yes*, sir, lost us our fox, sir. D'ye call that nothin', sir? If you don't, *I* do, you perpendicular-looking, Puseyite pig-jobber! By Jove! You think because I'm a lord and can't swear or use coarse language that you may do what you like—but I'll take my hounds home, sir—*yes*, sir, I'll take my hounds home, sir!" So saying his lordship roared *Home* to Frostyface; adding, in an undertone to the first whip "*bid him go to Furring-field gorse.*"

"*You think because I'm a lord and can't swear*" —was there ever a more splendid instance of self-restraint in the presence of unbearable provocation? Was ever the fine precept *noblesse oblige* more finely followed? Even in the moment of his hottest though most justifiable passion Lord Scamperdale remembered that he was a lord and could not use coarse language. Still, like the soldier who received a wound in the back, he felt that he owed something to his position!

XI.

A PARISIAN IN LONDON, 1789.

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A PARISIAN IN LONDON, 1789.

“FROM all we have said, this English nation, although it is only separated from us by a strait seven leagues broad, must appear so different from our own, that, if we were only to consider its customs, its language, its laws and religious opinions, we might think that it was situated in the Antipodes.” Such is the conclusion of M. Decremps, a travelled Frenchman, of good temper and judgment, who in 1789 published at Amsterdam two small volumes of “Advice to Frenchmen who go to England.” His advice must have proved very useful to the many *émigrés* who in the following years fled to England

to escape the horrors of the Revolution. At the beginning of this new century, it is not without interest to turn back the pages of history, and to see ourselves as others saw us, how London struck a contemporary over one hundred years ago.

M. Decremps does not trouble himself to tickle our national vanity; he tells us in his preface that he is not going to describe England as if he were a painter enamoured of his model, but on the other hand he avoids caricature. So far as he can he promises that he will "nothing extenuate nor set down ought in malice." And he reminds his readers that, whatever hard things he may have to say about England, it is, at any rate, the native land of the great philanthropist, M. Howard.

"The first thing," our practical guide informs us, "that a stranger must do on arriving in England is to provide himself with a small pair of scales wherewith to weigh his guineas and half-guineas. For so

many of these coins are false, sweated or clipped, that one runs great risk unless some such precautions are taken. Cases are on record where strangers with fifty guineas in their pockets have been unable to buy a pair of shoes, because, as they had taken their coins without examination, these all proved to be below the legal standard. Every shopkeeper," he adds, "keeps a pair of scales to weigh the gold, and since you cannot pay a guinea without its being weighed it is only fair to weigh your guinea when you receive one. Foreigners must get over their objection to this indispensable necessity. After all, once the habit is acquired, it is no trouble. Fifty guineas can be weighed in a quarter of an hour. It is not worth while, however, to weigh shillings, for there are so few *good* ones and one loses so little on each, that people do not take the trouble to refuse them. But you must not weigh money received from gentlemen of rank in their

presence; wait till they have departed, and then inform them of their debt within twenty-four hours. Beware of guineas that are suspiciously thick; these will too often be of the right weight but of the wrong metal.

“To hear some Frenchmen who have travelled in England one would fancy that the roads are crowded with highwaymen; and that it is impossible to go from London to Canterbury without being stopped on the plain of Blackheath;* that one must hide his gold watch and only display a watch of silver or copper, and that the prudent traveller is in the habit of putting his money and his letters of credit in his boots and setting aside a special purse for the robbers. *Heu fuge littus avarum!* cry these Frenchmen; fly from this country where crime is increased by avarice and the failure of the law!”

* Nowadays of course we have changed all that. You need not go to Blackheath to get robbed but only as far as Hyde Park. It is the result of progress.

"There are, of course," M. Decremps observes, "more thieves in England than in France; but it does not follow that travelling is not safe." He assures us that he has performed the journey from Dover to London six times, by night as well as by day, and four times from London to Brighthelmstone, not only without disaster but even without fear. His reasons for his fearlessness are that, even if a robber had appeared and demanded his purse he would have drawn from his pocket something quite other than money; and highwaymen, knowing that nowadays passengers always carry pistols, either present themselves trembling or do not present themselves at all. There is no danger of being attacked by a band of robbers. Such a thing cannot exist in England, where the pardon and the reward granted to an accomplice who turns King's evidence are enough to prevent any honour among thieves. "But," he adds, "it may be asked, if this is so, how does it

happen that the *London Gazettes* contain every day a terrifying list of travellers who have been robbed the night before, and why does every coach carry a guard armed with blunderbuss and bayonet?" His answer is that the papers of that day, unlike our modern journals, often published false and foolish statements in order to fill up their space and to save themselves from supplying subscribers with blank sheets of paper. As to the armed guard, his presence does not exactly prove the existence of the danger but rather serves to destroy it. Still it must be admitted that travelling in England is not so safe as travelling in France, and the passenger's chief protection lies in his being armed and in his striving to present an appearance of security and boldness calculated to warn the robbers of the danger they will incur if they approach.

The young Frenchman on arriving in London

should rest a few days at an inn, then, if he intends to make a long stay in the town, he should take lodgings with some middle-class family. He will be able to get a very good room for seven shillings a week. Ladies find it more difficult to make an arrangement of this kind, as they are generally more difficult to please and occasion a little more embarrassment. That is why one so often sees the placard—"Furnished lodgings for a single gentleman."

Although London is at least as large as Paris it is very easy for a stranger to traverse every part of it without a guide and without losing himself. For when once he has learnt on a map the position of the principal streets—Oxford, Piccadilly, Pall Mall, Le Strand, and a few others, he can go anywhere in perfect confidence that after a quarter of an hour's walking he will find himself in one or the other or else in the country. This is so true that the very morning after his arrival in London the writer went

for a long walk by himself in the different quarters and returned to his lodgings without once asking the way of anybody. Two days afterwards, when he boasted of his prowess, a man wagered him that he would not find his way unassisted from the Tower to Portman Square in an hour and a quarter. The Frenchman won his bet and, moreover, reached his goal by the shortest route.

It is a question frequently raised, whether London is greater or less than Paris. This question, the author tells us, daily produces interminable discussions. The subject, he remarks, is ambiguous. Is it a question of inhabitants or of extent? Are we to include the suburbs of Islington, Chelsea and Knightsbridge? Are we to count the river population, and are we to count the inhabitants of London in the winter when Parliament is sitting or in the six summer months when Marylebone and Westminster are entirely deserted? The fairest test, he

determines, of the population of a town is the death-rate; and from this he deduces the conclusion that London like Paris has about one million inhabitants.

Owing to its geographical position Paris time is about nine minutes in advance of London time. This remark may appear trivial to some readers, but it may be of great importance in some cases. Time wagers and mutual Tontines for instance, if entered into by parties living respectively in London and Paris, will leave the Parisian at a considerable disadvantage. (This fact has since been ingeniously used, it will be remembered, by M. Jules Verne in his romance "Round the World in Eighty Days.")

Our author proceeds to impress upon his countrymen the desirability of learning English before going to England. He describes his own first arrival in London and the gratitude he felt to an Englishman who came to his relief with execrable French, yet

speaking as it seemed like a god, when he himself was in trouble through not knowing English and was surrounded by a crowd, who regarded him as a rarity. He warns Frenchmen against the tricks of interpreters and against the partiality of the English law, which always sides with the poor against the rich and favours the worker rather than the employer. He is discreet in his refusal to answer outright the question: How long does it take to learn English? "I will answer," he replies, "when you tell me how long it takes to build a house. It depends. If you wish simply to be able to ask for the necessities of life it is one thing; if you wish to know the treasures of the language as well as Johnson or Dr. Lowth, it is another. But if you wish to learn English quickly do not let your master teach you the rules of grammar or make you translate some sublime work like the 'Adventures of Telemachus' or the

'Tragedies' of Shakespere. Tell him that that is the method employed at College to learn very little Latin in the space of six years. Learn English by routine, by ear, as Demosthenes learnt Greek and Cicero learnt Latin. Otherwise you will find yourself in the position of the man who, after studying Young's 'Night Thoughts' and Milton's 'Paradise Lost' for six months, had to hire an interpreter to buy a Nankeen waistcoat of his tailor and a pair of boots of his bootmaker. Let your master then only teach you pronunciation and read the *Gazettes* daily, for there you will find every variety of style, and there every subject, from Kings to prizefighters, is treated.

"Some of the streets of this town are so large and they are adorned with pavements so beautiful that they serve as promenades. But certain precautions should be observed. In the first place, though it is possible to appear in French costume it is never in

good taste to make oneself remarkable by one's costume. It would be imprudent, rash even, for anyone to appear with his hat under his arm, whether he be dressed in a black suit with long hair or in *habit galonné* with a sword. Decent people, doubtless, would only laugh, but such a one would certainly be hooted by the mob, who might even go so far as to roll him in the mud. Worse even would happen if a Roman Catholic priest or a monk travelling in this country were to appear in the costume of his order.

"Strangers often consider that the police are very lax in this matter, and that the people are very rough and unreasonable. This may be the case, but one ought to expect that if an Englishman, who is accustomed, at home, to speak very freely about the actions of his Government, found himself in a strictly monarchical country and wished to speak in the English manner of affairs of state, no one would

acquit him of imprudence ; everyone would remind him of the respect due to the Sovereign. Well, in London the people must be regarded as sovereign with reference to the customs of the country. And from this point of view we ought to obey them up to a certain degree. It is true that their rules are sometimes very strange ; but there would be still more strangeness on your part if you persisted in wearing a costume which offends the Englishman's sight and affected to display a certain superiority in a country where they believe in the Equality of Man ; and if, amongst a nation which worships and idolises its liberty, you wished so to use yours as to offend its conscience and break its idols.

“ A word of warning will not be out of place here to the effect that when a man wears buttons of the same material as his coat he is actually liable to be arrested and taken before a Justice of the peace. For there is an Act of Parliament which forbids

Tailors, under the penalty of a heavy fine, to use simple buttons which have not been made by a professional button-maker. This law, though it appears unjust and very singular, is really very humane and very wise, for it saves the button-makers from being reduced to beggary by a change of fashion, and by encouraging the manufacture it encourages the export of buttons. The foreigner who wears a coat with buttons of the same stuff, made in his own country, is not fined when he is arrested for the first time, but he must change his buttons if he does not want to be arrested and condemned next day."

After some further advice as to behaviour in the streets, in the course of which he strongly recommends the young Frenchman not to dispute his fare with a cabman, but to agree with his adversary while he is in the way with him and then to complain to the Police Bureau, and also advises him to study (like Mr. Soapy Sponge) "Fielding's Hackney

Coach Rates," our author passes to the subject of Pickpockets. "It is," he says, "as a rule very dangerous to let any gold or jewellery be seen on you in England; in France a 'Beau' who wears two watches can draw out of his pocket a handful of gold to pay for a cup of coffee and he can do so with impunity. In Paris that is only a piece of folly; in London it would be sheer madness. There are pickpockets everywhere, but above all they hang about the print-shops, where the people sometimes stop in crowds to admire the masterpieces of design, or to satisfy their spite by gazing at the caricatures of the leading Personages of Europe. They throng the theatres too. The manager of the new Royalty Theatre, fearing that he would lose all his patrons owing to the frequent acts of theft committed there, paid two men to stand in the lobby of the theatre and call out 'Take care of your pockets, gentlemen!'

“ Another occasion on which the pickpockets make a rich harvest is when two men come to fisticuffs in the streets, as they do in full exercise of their liberty and in enjoyment of the right which is founded on custom and prescribed by the people in defiance of the written law, by an uninterrupted and immemorial usage. People flock to form a ring round the two combatants. The athletes strip off their coats and sometimes their shirts, they belabour each other with fearful blows and alternately knock each other down. It seems as if their heavy bodies must in their fall break the pavement.

“ But they speedily get up again and attack each other with redoubled fury. The spectators, rapt in admiration, increase the uproar and fill the air with their terrible cries. The friends of the combatants shout words that no decent citizen can hear without trembling, ‘ Courage, Thomas! That was a good one!

Give him another on the head, James! Play your own game! Smash his eyes, break his teeth, hit him in the bread-basket!' (*enforce lui le panier au pain*). Encouraged by the huzzas of this civilised people the two valiant heroes continue fighting and breaking their bones; and the conqueror, who usually retires with his eyes blackened, his nose broken and his jaw dislocated, is quite proud to think that his adversary has had a threefold dose of the same kind of 'honour.' They end by shaking hands and going off to drink a pot of beer. Then, too late, you discover that you have not 'taken care of your pockets.' Thieves, however, are not so bold as might be supposed, because they know that in some parishes there is a reward of a guinea given to anyone who catches them in the act, and that, besides the legal penalty the people sometimes punish them on their own initiative, by conducting them to the banks of the river and ducking them therein.

“Fighting of the kind that has been described and also Prize Fights of one sort or another are very common; but, frequent as they are, it must not be supposed that an honest man cannot be any length of time in London without fighting. I have therefore always regarded with astonishment those Frenchmen who do not care to go to England, because they imagine, from the exaggerated accounts of unreliable travellers, that in London they do nothing but fight from morn till eve. If this were really the case, what, one is obliged to ask, would become of the old men and children—and Quakers? The fact is a man need not fight unless he wishes to do so. If he gives in at once, or else lies down on the ground, his adversary will not be allowed to touch him. If he did the crowd would stone him. I remember, in this connection, that when I was on my first voyage to England I met a well-known artist at Rouen who tried to dissuade me from

continuing my journey, and made me read a passage in a recently published book to the effect that in the London streets strangers are continually elbowed off the pavement, and knocked down in the mud without redress, whilst the children have by nature so great an antipathy to the French nation that they stand at the windows ready to spit at any Frenchman who may pass in the streets. I was not so weak or foolish as to judge a great nation from a printed diatribe. I continued my journey without fear. Afterwards when I told some Englishmen what I had been given to read in order to prevent my visiting them, they laughed and admitted that the English, in their turn, entertain some even cruder prejudices against the French. For some imagine that French cooks never roast any meat but mice and cats, and others that Frenchmen eat nothing but frogs. In fact, I remember reading the following paragraph in one of the gazettes—*The*

Public Ledger:—‘It seems that we are on the point of war; for yesterday at 10-35 the Government despatched special messengers to all coast-towns to warn them to kill all the frogs, in order that, if the French should land on our shores, they may be unable to find anything for their larders.’

“After nightfall the narrow and deserted streets are infested by Footpads. They are armed with pistols, and it would be dangerous to resist them. The most prudent plan is to let them take what they want and not to carry on one’s person any articles of great value. However, you must not suppose that no precautions are taken against these gentlemen. There are Night Watchmen at certain places who make their rounds with a lantern every half-hour, to succour those who are attacked and to warn careless householders to shut their doors. Some people think that these Watchmen are for the most part old and infirm, and that it is the

etiquette to beat them; I can assure you that they are not to be struck with impunity; for even if some of them are incapable of resistance, they can quickly summon to their aid lusty fellows equipped with fire-arms. Several times each half-hour the Watchmen are obliged to call out the time and the weather, 'Past two o'clock, moonlight morning,' and so forth. By this means the public is assured that the Watchmen are at their posts and not asleep."

Our author is perhaps most severe when he deals with the subject of English cooking. Even at Vauxhall, he complains, you have to ruin yourself—to get an attack of indigestion. For breakfast at a London inn, instead of the coffee or chocolate of Paris, you can only procure, and that with difficulty, some cold water and a pinch of tea. For this you have to pay eightpence. Eggs, chickens and fish are very dear, and English cookery has no knowledge of the variety of dishes which are to be

found at every French Restaurant. Some people do, indeed, assert that it is possible to live in London as cheaply as in Paris; but that can only be done by consenting to eat nothing but roast beef and to drink beer. The ordinary English dinner begins and ends with a roast joint, served with cabbage, spinach and potatoes. But these vegetables are merely cooked in water and have no seasoning beyond that which each guest adds for himself. Green peas, when there are any, are likewise boiled in water, without salt and without butter. Peas and other vegetables are eaten without forks. Knives are used for this purpose, and the clumsy run the risk of cutting their lips and gums. There is no risk of covering the napkin with blood, for there are no napkins. The English use the tablecloth instead—if it is long enough. They never eat soup; instead they have Pudding, a kind of indigestible pastry, unknown in great houses but very

common among the middle classes. As they dine late in England, supper is a very frugal affair. It consists, as a rule, of cold meat and a bad salad. An Englishman rarely asks a friend to dine at his house; when he does so, as soon as dinner is finished the ladies retire to discuss *modes* and *chiffons*, whilst the men remain to talk business or politics. This etiquette seems very strange to a Frenchman; but I find it very useful for husbands, because their wives, being less familiar with strangers, have fewer opportunities of being unfaithful than they have in France.

“Englishmen, usually, when they wish to entertain their friends, take them to a tavern—the ordinary haunt of idlers and politicians. Taverns, however, are very respectable places; some of them are frequented daily by Members of Parliament and gentlemen of the highest degree. There English liberty is enjoyed to the full; the various govern-

ments of Europe are criticised up and down ; judgment is passed upon Kings. There wine circulates in floods, as if it only cost thirty sous a bottle, and verses are sung in honour of the most famous beauties. The etiquette is to drink a bumper to every couplet and only to drink after the pronouncement of one of those 'sentiments' which the English love almost as much as wine. The national spirit and the national pride are shown by such popular sentiments as these :—

'If the sea cannot be our Empire, let it be our tomb !'
or,
'Peace with America, and war with all the rest of
the world !'

"It will be noticed that the London taverns are not filled, as at Paris, with brutish drinkers who seem to have lost the faculty of thought ; but that the conversation there is instructive, moral and healthy, and always tends to inspire courage and

patriotism. At the ale-houses, even, which are a kind of second-class tavern, a certain standard of civility is observed, but it belongs to that order of English politeness which sometimes resembles French rudeness. Respectable people, who are in need of rest or refreshment, need have no hesitation about going into the *parlours* of these houses; but, to be at their ease, they ought to be accustomed to the fume of tobacco; for smokers are provided there with pipes, as with papers, *gratis*, and they produce thick clouds of smoke and only speak at intervals and in monosyllables. Sometimes—but rarely—it happens that two intrepid sailors will engage in a smoking match. Then they throw volumes of smoke into each other's faces, and the first to give in has to pay for beer. There are no glasses on the table, and everybody has to drink from the same pot. It would be out of place for a Frenchman to display his natural repugnance for this custom; it is, at any

rate, not dangerous to the health, for the English, in spite of this habit, make fairly good soldiers.

“When the company has well drunk and smoked, the conversation turns to politics. At first everybody speaks in his turn, but presently nobody listens because everybody speaks at once. But, at last, there is always one person who by the power of his voice and the violence of the blows which he deals on the table, secures the attention of the company. Then, if he speaks without respect for the most respectable personages, and if, whilst he lauds to the skies the majesty of the people, he utters sarcasms against the Government, he is heard with admiration, and everybody ends by drinking the health of the ‘Good people of England.’”

M. Decremps tells several amusing anecdotes to illustrate the national pride of the English (a vice which, like that of cooking vegetables in water, we have not yet entirely discarded). The best of

these anecdotes is as follows :—An Englishman was delivering a pompous eulogy of the ingenious inventions which owe their existence to England, but he would not admit that there was any value in aeronautics, which he doubtless considered mere *balloonacy*. For he added that the French temperament was so light and frivolous that it was not surprising if M. de Montgolfier had invented balloons. A Frenchman retorted that the English on the other hand were so heavy by nature that it was not surprising if Newton had discovered the law of gravity. . . .

“The Englishman,” our author continues, “is always sad and silent, but in London on Sunday he is doubly silent and sad. The theatres are closed, and even the most innocent games are regarded as a profanation. An inn-keeper who allowed chess or dominoes to be played in his house would lay himself open to the penalty of a heavy fine, and the

citizen who played the flute or violin in his rooms would promptly be mobbed by the populace, who, to sanctify the Sabbath, would assemble to swear at him and break his windows. M. Grosley in his *Work on London* says that no papers are published in London on Sunday. That was true enough twenty years ago, perhaps; but to-day I know of four separate ones, among which is Ayres' *Sunday Gazette*. The Editor of this paper, in order to conform to public opinion, always begins with a folio page of icy reflections, truly English, on intemperance and the other vices which reign especially on Sunday; but though he himself declaims against spite and the manners of the day, that does not prevent him from publishing very piquant satires against persons of distinction, or from praising the actors and dancers who have appeared on the stage during the week.

“ To rid himself of the boredom of his Sunday the

Englishman generally goes for a ride on horseback, but *Post equitem sedet atra cura*—‘ Behind the horseman black care sits!’ To meet the requirements of these unhappy horsemen many inn-keepers prepare a good dinner for a large number of travellers o’ Sunday, but at the City restaurants on Sunday the coldest place in the house is the kitchen, and they will tell you that there is nothing to eat on Sunday. People of severe morality give high praise to the English for their complete suppression of all amusement on this day ; but one might point out to them that the most austere regulations produce great inconveniences, when they are applied to all classes without distinction. The law which forbids the English to dance and sing on Sundays sometimes occasions great evils, for, as there is not as yet any law to forbid eating and drinking, the nation gives itself up to excesses in this direction—excesses which would not occur if there were any other means of

amusement. Hence arise the quarrels and fights which are so common on Sunday, hence arises that sadness which is characteristic of the English and which leads them to suicide." (As a matter of fact, one may note that the rate of suicide in Paris at the present time is four times as high as that of London.) "Quarrels, however, only occur in the evening on Sunday; till five o'clock in the afternoon that day is like a "Retreat," in fact, I have never seen a monastery in France where there was so little gaiety as there is in England on Sundays, excepting always the monasteries of Chartreux and La Trappe.

"There are people who assert that it is the dearness of wine that causes in London this lack of gaiety, this boredom with life. I admit that this circumstance may have something to do with it, but, as the Flemish and Brabançons drink as much beer as the English without having the same malady, I do not think that this is the principal reason for the

melancholy which consumes the inhabitant of Great Britain. Besides, there are innumerable cases of rich English people who have committed suicide there, apart from those who are obliged through lack of fortune to drink beer. It is therefore probable that the coal smoke and the thick fogs, which they breathe continually, contribute more than the dear-ness of wine to trouble the brains of Englishmen and to produce consumption.

“But if I may judge from what I have felt myself and from the manner in which I have myself been affected during two years’ sojourn in London, I should say that the *chagrin* and *ennui* which reign in this country owe their existence to the laws and the constitution of England.

“For in the first place the English constitution tends to render the police ineffective and the people insolent. It favours liberty, which may at any moment degenerate into licence and produce the in-

subordination which is far from leading to peace and gaiety. In the second place the laws leave so many resources to the accused and require so much evidence to secure the condemnation of the guilty, that an infinite number of malefactors remain at large and the evil-minded are encouraged in their enterprises.

“The Government has neither the necessary authority, nor perhaps the desire that it ought to have, to remedy all those abuses which are surely calculated to inspire sadness. Thirdly, discussions on the government among a Sovereign People, which asserts that the King is only a subject, must lead to resistance rather than to submission; and if in this country amusements are forbidden by law the people must devote itself to its business much more than to its pleasures. In such a country avarice must be a very common vice; but avarice, even when it has been satisfied to a certain extent,

rarely brings contentment and happiness. A man yawns in the bosom of his abundance and according to the proverb, 'one good yawn makes two.' Apply the law of arithmetical progression and you will understand why *ennui* is depicted on every countenance and is shared by the whole nation. Fourthly, although the principle of the equality of man seems to be authorised by law, there is always a very real difference between the virtuous and the vicious, the wise and the foolish, the rich and the poor; but in a country like England the poor man must naturally have on his side grossness and insolence, to serve as shield and buckler against the oppression of the rich and powerful. The insolence of the crowd necessarily obliges those who are in any way above it to observe the most exact etiquette, that is to say, to avoid every opportunity of compromising themselves. But as pride rules the world, and as each man pretends to some superiority over his

neighbour, at least in the matter of talent and virtue, one sees on every side proud and inaccessible creatures, who only speak at the most in monosyllables and seem vowed to a perpetual silence. This taciturn humour renders them dreamy and melancholic; sadness reigns supreme over their souls, they are bored with existence, and this pensive people finds itself reduced almost to a state of vegetation.

“ The authority of the Government and the vigilance of the Police produce very different results in Paris. Each individual being assured of the protection of the laws, even in the enjoyment of his pleasures, the people sing and dance, and have, so to speak, no time to think of their misery or to perceive the burden of life. They enjoy every day the amusement which each day brings and take no thought for the morrow, provided only that they have their *panem et circenses*. The French Philosopher who

wishes to indulge in profound reflection brings even into his study something of Parisian gaiety. He knows that a wise magistrate and a beneficent minister watch continually over his safety, and that his fellow-citizens are too much occupied by their pleasures to think of him or to disturb his solitude. In his profoundest meditations he is sometimes, indeed, distracted by the sound of the violin or by the voice of the singer; but the vulgarest music causes him no annoyance, because it only reminds him that, when he emerges from his retreat, he will find on every side of him peace and concord, laughter and good-will."

The cruel irony of facts dealt suddenly and harshly with the optimism of good M. Decremps as it appears in the last paragraph. For France at that moment was on the brink of the Revolution, and our author, when he witnessed the excesses of his countrymen in the ensuing years, may well have

exclaimed with Candide, "*Quoi? De telles horreurs chez un peuple qui danse et qui chante!*" Nor can we take his explanation of the English character very seriously. But it is interesting to note that this picture of the sad and silent Englishman who goes through the Continent like an east wind, blighting the gaiety of nations with his constitutional melancholy, his gruff monosyllables, and his assumption of superiority, is as true a representation of the Continental and American idea of him to-day as it was when it was written, over one hundred years ago.

XII.

QUOTATIONS.

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"*Moriar nisi facete!*" Cicero exclaims somewhere. " 'Pon my life, that is well put!" Any phrase which, by its conciseness, wit, beauty or suggestiveness, wrings that exclamation from a reader has a good chance of passing into a familiar quotation. When we hear the neat expression of an obvious truth or frequent situation we make a mental note of it; it is scored on the tablets of the quotable, for it will supply us with that power of epigrammatic expression in which most of us are lacking. Like a proverb, a good quotation is compounded of the wisdom of many and the wit of one. It carries with it the authority

of the wisdom of the wise and the experience of ages, and it bolsters up the opinions or the arguments of the diffident controversialist. Or, again, because "we needs must love the highest when we see it," we use the felicitous phrases of others in place of our own halting words, and gladly avail ourselves of the literary flavour and the touch of quaintness that are lent to our conversation or our writings by the illustration of some choice and ancient phrase.

Quotations serve also as a kind of shorthand of the mind; they supply us with the conclusion of an argument and enable us to refer, without proving each step of that argument, to the place where the proofs may be found. There is a certain danger lurking here. We may be led to accept too readily conclusions, the premisses of which we have not investigated; it places us also too much at the mercy of the garbler. As the purpose of rhetoric is to persuade, the rhetorical use of quotations is patent, and ancient

writers on oratory always insist on its value. Just as eloquence, the noblest form of imposture, is usually introduced to obscure the evidence, so an apt quotation will often seem to clinch an argument which it really only illustrates. But the personality of an orator and the impetuous torrent of his speech prevent his audience from realizing this, and heighten the specious appearance of authority derived from his quotations. The most famous and one of the most effective instances of the use of a quotation for rhetorical purposes occurred in Pitt's speech on the slave trade. But that was in the days when every politician was expected to know his Horace and his Virgil. Now statesmen only quote each other's speeches, and even then they usually exercise the art of misquotation. In literature, too, as well as politics, the great age of literary quotation is past. Writers in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries carried the art even to extremes. The

respect for authority, which came to them through the tradition of the Schoolmen, inspired them with a reverence for the classics on which they relied until they had gradually worked out their own salvation and realised their heritage of a great literature written by original thinkers of their own age and country. The classical writers themselves, and especially those most read at that time, were great quoters. Plutarch, Athenæus, Cicero revel in copious quotation. And Cicero set the bad example of quoting most when he was writing on subjects of which he knew least. He saved himself the trouble of thought by quoting the verdicts of Greek thinkers. Under influences such as these there arose in Europe a school of writers who carried quotation to the verge of mere compilation. Pineda, says Sir Thomas Browne, quotes more authors in one work than are necessary in a whole world. Montaigne, Burton (from whom, curiously enough, Sterne borrowed in his day till he

passed the limits of plagiarism), and, to a certain extent, Addison, all gathered posies of other men's flowers; little but the thread that bound them was their own, although the value of that thread was much higher than they themselves in their modesty would have claimed. Nowadays quotation is chiefly used, like the "Peerage," to point a moral or adorn a tale. The time is past when the happy application of a verse from Virgil was, according to Cardinal du Peron, worth a talent. But in the appropriate choice of a text for a sermon there is still scope for ingenious quotation. When the siege of Vienna was relieved by the arrival of John Sobieski, King of Poland, a sermon was preached on the text, "There was a man sent by God, whose name was John." A more recent and less well-known instance is related in the Life of Robert Moffat, the African missionary. An old Boer would not admit his Hottentot slaves to divine service in their master's house. He would rather, he

said, call the baboons from the mountains or the dogs from without the house to form a congregation. In reply the missionary selected as his text, "Truth, Lord, but even the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the master's table."

The love of a mere parade of learning had, no doubt, something to do with the prolific references in which some of the old writers indulged. Milton cruelly said of Prynne, who carried the practice of quoting authorities in the margins of his books to a ridiculous extreme, that "he always had his wits beside him in the margin, to be beside his wits in the text." Still there is much to be said for a practice which enables the reader to verify his references, and secures him against second-hand and inaccurate quotations. For otherwise, amongst other evil consequences, the origin of phrases as they come more and more into current use, becomes less and less known. How many people know, when they call a

spade a spade, that they are quoting Aristophanes, or that when they say "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast," that this is the first line in Congreve's tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*? How many of those who use the saying, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," know that they are *not* quoting Scripture, but Sterne's "Sentimental Journey," or that the poetical couplet,

"True as the dial to the sun,
Although it be not shined upon,"

is to be found in the "Hudibras" of Butler?

It is, perhaps, for the reason that people quote in these days so much at second-hand that they so often misquote.

"To-morrow to fresh *fields* and pastures new."

and

"*Small* by degrees and beautifully less."

are two well-known instances of corrupt quotations from Milton and Prior. For this reason, too, and owing partly to bad memories, partly to the desire

of the nervous *raconteur* to seek refuge in the authority of a great name, so many of the great *mots*, phrases, and retorts are ascribed to a few famous wits, to Talleyrand or Voltaire, to Sheridan or Sidney Smith. The witty or punning misapplication of a quotation, which has provided the present generation with so prolific a fund of entertainment, is, of course, to be distinguished from mere misquotation. A good example is the "*Fiat Justitia ruat Cælum*" of the judge who, when part of the ceiling of the court fell in, refused an adjournment.

Apocryphal quotations, again, form a class by themselves. It is useless to tell us that the "Up guards and at 'em!" of Wellington at Waterloo, or the "Sir, let us take a walk down Fleet Street," of Dr. Johnson are not genuine utterances. There is, indeed, some evidence for the former, and, at any rate, we shall continue to attribute these sayings to the men who might have originated them even if they did not.

Here it is not our lack of knowledge, but our sense of character and style, that compels us to feign an ignorance though we have it not, and to persist in referring such sayings to the men who might, who ought to have said them. And in the same way we may cling to and quote as the blunder of a school-boy the deliberate invention of a wit, even though we may happen to know the perverse person who was father to that imaginary victim of the examiner. "Edward the Third would have been King of France, if his mother had been a man"; "The penalty of forgery was that a man should be hanged if guilty, and banished if innocent"; "The marriage custom of the ancient Greeks was that they should marry only one wife, and this they called monotony," these and a dozen other instances that spring to mind, sift themselves from the chaff, and are gathered into the ample garner of quotations, because, like Irish Bulls of the true quality, they are ingenious failures, aiming

at the expression of an idea vaguely conceived or half-remembered and issuing in wit. Of such a sort, but more confused, was that definition of a quotation as "the answer to a division sum"!

XIII.

FALSE PATHOS.

XIII.

FALSE PATHOS.

"I COULD lose an arm without a tear and with few groans, methinks, be quartered into pieces ; yet can I weep most seriously at a Play and receive with true passion the counterfeit grief of those known and professed Impostures." So wrote Sir Thomas Browne in the "*Religio Medici*." The fortitude which he supposed himself to possess can hardly be predicated of everybody, but all, or almost all, of us have shared his "true passion" in the presence of the counterfeit sorrows of Fiction or the Drama. We may even presume to pity those who have not the

heart or the imagination to suffer such emotions. But the cultivated reader, consciously or unconsciously, draws the line without any hesitation between the genuine appeal to his emotion and that which is not genuine, between the false Pathos and the true. It is in this matter that he cannot tolerate "Impostures," professed or unprofessed. What then *is* false pathos? The question is often asked and it is not easily answered, for though false pathos and false sentiment are quickly known and condemned by the reader when he sees them, he would in most cases find them somewhat difficult on the spur of the moment to describe or to explain. Perhaps it may be found that the following considerations will apply to the more glaring instances. First to define. If pathos may be described as that which, in language or in art, excites the emotions and passions, we may perhaps hazard a definition of false pathos as that which works upon them by illegitimate means. For in writing a

pathetic scene the author may offend in three ways—he may lack sincerity of motive and genuine emotion himself and thus sin against the Horatian precept *Si vis nos flere, dolendum est Primum ipsi tibi*, or he may err in the treatment, or in the choice, of his subject. The first error, naturally enough, often leads to the committing of the third. This was the case, notably, with the Sentimentalists, and of sentimentalists we may take Sterne as an example. He was certainly the greatest artist in a school which included Petrarch and Richardson on the one hand and Rousseau on the other. Sterne, the wit, the master of the incongruous, is beyond praise; but Sterne in the province of pathos, luxuriating in his sensibility, loses all sense of proportion. He writes continually at a pitch of pathos which must exhaust the most sentimental of travellers in the paths of fiction. He will weep for anything or anybody without reason, without restraint. The “Sentimental Journey” is a

triumph of irrelevant snivelling. The author waters the road from Calais to Paris with tears pumped up for live starlings and dead donkeys. The result is to produce disgust in us, for we perceive that his pathos is not concerned with a true sympathy for suffering, but with the pleasure of enduring vicarious sorrow. Like the man who, Catullus says, was always smiling, in and out of season, in order to display his teeth, Sterne is always weeping for the pleasure of showing off his gift of tears. His sentimentalism is simply the exercise of exciting and enjoying tearful emotions for their own sake. The reader quite rightly refuses to accept these fresh-water tears as the sign or the product of genuine pathos. The tears, he feels, that have real salt in them will keep; they do not flow so easily; they are the difficult, manly tears that are shed in secret. The sentimentalist is usually incapable of genuine sentiment. He prefers to indulge in imaginary sorrows to facing the

discomfort of facts. The artist who has given way to such self-indulgence has to pay the reckoning. When tears have become for him so much more important than the cause of them, his choice of subject is apt to be false. His tears are poured forth over figures that are vain, conjured up for the express purpose of exhibiting the author's power of lachrymose slobbering. So was it with Sterne. In his case there is no fault in the manner of presentation. He stands pre-eminent as an artistic manager of scenes. His skill in selecting and arranging the most telling details with a view to making the most of a simple scene by the aid of a few simple words has never been surpassed. It is the sentiment itself that rings false. The death of Yorick is an instance, and, though we may grant the macaroon-fed donkey of Tristram Shandy his place in the world of pathos, the dead ass of the "Sentimental Journey," whose tearful master lays a crust of bread on the now vacant

bit of his bridle, is, without doubt, a humbug; the sentiment is hypocritical, the pathos false.

Dickens offers an effective contrast to Sterne in this matter of false pathos. His works afford the most glaring instances of the second of those errors into which we have suggested that dealers in the pathetic may fall. It would be absurd to deny that Dickens has moments of genuine pathos, but he is hardly ever content with moderation; he hardly ever observes the rule of "not too much." The exaggeration which haunts him, as an artist, in his satire, in his humour (though there it is less frequent and more artfully concealed) is painfully evident in his pathos. This absence of the feeling for limit leads him, when he hits upon a pathetic situation, to work it up, add to it, insist upon it, overdo it, boil it, and whip it up until it gushes over in a froth of unnatural and unbearable fulsomeness. But pathos above all things requires criticism and restraint in the handling; it

needs a sense of dignity and reticence in the presentment. Thus Antigone, forbidden on pain of death to perform the rites of burial for her dead brother, announces her resolve :

“I'll bury him : doing this, so let me die.
So with my loved one, loved shall I abide,
My crime a deed most holy : for the dead
Longer have I to please than these on earth.
There I shall dwell for ever.”

In that simple speech we recognise the true pathetic ring. Some of the speeches of Constance, again, are truly pathetic, as when she utters the splendid phrase—“Here I and sorrows sit”; but when, in mourning the loss of Arthur, she gives way to extravagant lamentation, Shakespere himself supplies the criticism. “You hold too heinous a respect of grief.” “You are as fond of grief as of your child.” Especially important are those qualities of dignity and reticence when the subject chosen is that of death-bed scenes or of the misfortunes of children.

But the subject most frequently chosen by Dickens for the exercise of pathos was the overwhelming by Death or cruel Fate of some young child, weakly or half-witted, and incapable of resistance. Memories of Smike, of Little Nell, of the death-bed of little Paul Dombey, crowd upon us in proof of it. Now this subject is undeniably pathetic, but, as all other great writers appear to have seen, whether by instinct or education, whether in obedience to the precepts of Aristotle or to their own sense of propriety, it is so pathetic in itself that any elaboration of it must strike a false note. How seldom and how simply does Homer treat of such a theme as the fate of Astyanax; how short, how simple, and how rare in Shakespere are such scenes as that between Arthur and Hubert! Where you get the true tragic pathos, the conflict of heroes overborne by circumstance, you get also a struggle with fate which renders a certain elaboration permissible. For the develop-

ment of such a situation discloses the history of strong men, who are fitted to do all that man can do by way of resistance. With children and weaklings the case is different; there can be no struggle, and beyond the simplest statement of or allusion to their misfortune there is little more to be said. Moreover, the great writers would seem to have felt that mere death-bed scenes and the tribulations of the young and very weak, are matters that lie so close to our daily experience that the barest allusion to them is a facile source of emotion. When we consider the havoc which is wrought by Death among the tender and the innocent, pity enters with an un-mixed softness and possesses all our souls at once. The simplest exposition of such situations is enough to suggest to the reader all the legitimate pathos inherent in the theme. Amplification can take no other form than that of a "damnable iteration," against which the reader despairingly protests that it makes

a cheap, an illegitimate, though irresistible, appeal to his emotions, and that twenty pages of harping on one painful theme is but a bourgeois style of art. The repetition of this one theme must either become insipid or tend to the merely sensual gratification of sentimentality, and land us once more in the region of false pathos. The emotions, indeed, to which appeal is made are real and deep and common to humanity, but it is natural to keep them under control and to suffer them with reticence. To exploit and insist upon the self-indulgent side of these emotions for the enjoyment of his readers, is as gross an outrage on the part of a writer as keening and wailing at a funeral would be considered in educated society.

XIV.

**AN ITALIAN SATIRIST AND RUGBY
FOOTBALL.**

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SATIRE, nowadays, is not a very great power in the land. Satirists may regret the fact, but they have their compensation. They may suck some comfort from the reflection that they are not likely now to be pilloried like Daniel Defoe or thrown into prison like George Withers. Neither Mr. Gilbert nor Mr. Gould is in imminent danger of assassination or arrest. But assassination, in the times of the Renaissance in Italy, was the usual end of the political satirist. It was the end of Trajano Boccalini, a Florentine writer of the 17th century, who incurred the common penalty

of his kind by publishing a political satire which exposed the weakness of the Spanish Monarchy. The interest of this work has evaporated as the circumstances, which gave occasion for it, have disappeared. But, if it seems of little importance to us to-day it was certainly of vital importance to the author. Fortunately Boccalini did not confine himself to politics. He was distinguished as an enthusiastic commentator of Tacitus, whilst his literary and social satire still affords some very pretty reading.

Here, for instance, are the reasons advanced by Apollo for refusing famous Printers admission into Parnassus :

“ Men praised the Art of Printing, he declared, upon very indiscreet grounds, for it was that that had infinitely obscured the glory of the Liberal Sciences ; for having made Libraries more numerous than good, they were admired only by the ignorant : and that when with infinite labour the writings of other men

were copied out by the pen, such as deserved not to pass through the hands of his Litterati, they and their shame died in the house of their unfortunate author, whereas now so great an abundance of foolish and ignorant volumes were printed as that Libraries were shamefully crammed with them, to the little reputation of the Liberal Sciences and of his Litterati; and that by reason of the unexhausted store which were printed of the learned labours of the Virtuosi, the Homers', Virgils', Ciceros' divine and painful labours, which, for the miracle of their wits, ought to be shown to men only upon some particular daies of the year, were polluted by flies and moths in every Book-Binder's Shop!" Like the philosophy of Nietzsche, the outcry against the New Woman, the Modern Impertinent, as Steele called her, and the unpopularity of the English, the complaint that there are too many new books is, it will be noted, hundreds of years old.

Boccalini's satirical fiction, "Advertisements from Parnassus," achieved great popularity throughout Europe, and was translated into several languages ; into English, notably, by the Earl of Monmouth (1656). In that book (*"I Raggvagli di Parnasso"*), under the thin pretence of giving news concerning transactions in the kingdom of Apollo, he satirised affairs past and present, literary and social, with considerable freedom. Monmouth, as was natural, expressed great admiration for him. "I shall believe," he says, "them to be of a queasie and depraved stomach who shall not find herein to please their palats : for my Author is an Ambodexter, plays rarely well at the Back-Sword ; gives sometimes very home and sharp Stockadoes ; and, in fine, lays about him hard on all sides." Modern taste, perhaps, would find him as a rule more wordy than witty, but it is impossible to doubt that both in manner and method his works had some influence

on Addison and Swift. In the more tolerant manner of Addison he satirizes all the stock subjects, striking now and again a note of more vehement and genuine indignation. But the essays of which the "Advertisements of Parnassus" is composed are not all satirical: some indeed are complimentary and written solely to please, others to inculcate some political doctrine. For in his duller moments Boccalini figures as a political moralist, saying This is good or That is bad, rather than as a satirist who laughs or lashes us into the true opinion. Occasionally, when in this mood, he plunges into over-elaborate allegories and gets badly bogged. His scope and learning, however, were immense, and in the course of his book he introduces us to a goodly company of famous men. Wits, Cardinals, Philosophers, Poets, Kings, and a hundred contemporary Italian Noblemen and Classical heroes file through his quaint pages, in anecdote or person, and come in for their meed of praise or blame, satire or admiration.

It is not in a writer of his kind or country that we expect to come across a description of Football. The game of *Calcio*, however, seems to me to bear a very close resemblance, in principle, to the Rugby Football of to-day. From Boccalini's account of it we can gather that sides were ranged as for a battle and the object was to hurl the wind-ball (*palla a vento*) over the enemy's lists, the modern cross-bar. In order to attain this end the player might, apparently, pick up the ball and run with it under his arm, handing off his opponents, or he might strike or kick the ball (*col pugno anche col calcio*). This is our satirical Italian's account of the game.

"The noble Florentines played the last Tuesday at the Calcio, which all the Litterati of Parnassus came to see; and though some, to whom it was a new sight to see so many Florentine Gentlemen fall to downright cuffs, said that that manner of proceed-

ing in that which was but play and sport was too harsh and not severe enough in a real combat ; yet the Virtuosi took delight to see it, for many praised the Gamesters' swift running, their nimble leaping and their strength ; others were very well pleased with the invention of the game, which was very good to breed up youth to run, leap and wrestle, and many believed this to be the cause why it was instituted in that formerly so famous Commonwealth ; but the quicker sighted Politicians argued from the going together by ears of these young Florentines that some great mysterie lay concealed in that sport ; for that Commonwealths are fuller of intestine hatred and hidden rancour of spirit than are Monarchies, by the reason of the continual flocking to Magistrates and frequent denials which are given to the Senators of such places as they desire, receiving doubtlessly more distastes thereby one from another, than is observed to fall out between people who live in a Monarchy ;

and, it being impossible but that some violent passion of anger must burst forth in a liberty full of distastes, the Politicians affirmed, That the Commonwealth of Florence had done very well and wisely in introducing the Calcio amongst her Citizens, to the end that having the satisfaction of giving four or five good round buffets in the face to those to whom they bare ill will, by way of sport, they might the better afterwards appease their anger;—an evaporation, which if it should be had upon another occasion by a dagger, it would have much endangered the publick liberty. The same Politicians affirm for certain, that the Sanesi introduced the famous *Gioco della Pugna* in their Commonwealth and the Venetians the assaulting of the bridge in theirs, for no other end but this. But it happened that a spruce Courtier, who was a Spectator at this sport, being asked by that famous Pietro Caponi, who, by the bold answer he gave to a King

of France, won eternal fame, how he liked their Calcio, answered, The Sport was very pleasant but that those Florentines did not play well. And the game of Calcio being particular to the Florentine nation and altogether unknown in other parts, Caponi thought the Courtier had said amiss: wherefore he asked him, whether he thought he could play better? The Courtier answered freely, that, if they would permit him to play with them, he would teach those Florentine Gentlemen the true art how to take the ball, how to run with it, how to repulse the wrestlers dextrously, who would take it away, and other excellent master-like tricks. Caponi laughed to hear the Courtier boast thus, and having acquainted all the Florentine Gamesters with what he said, they joyntly invited him to play. The Courtier made himself ready and entered the lists; where the Florentines, promising themselves much pastime in buffetting and abusing him, made him a round, and presently

the Ball was thrown up in the air by men appointed thereunto; which came no sooner to the ground but that the nimble Courtier ran towards it and having taken it up, clapped it under his left arm: those of the contrary party ran to take it away from him: but he with great strength justled one and thrust away another, and whereas the Florentines, who were masters of the Sport, thought to have thrown him down they were thrown down themselves; for the sturdy Courtier did so freely lay about him on all sides with his arm, shoulders, head and every part of him as he made all keep aloof, so as the greatest part of the Florentines of the adverse part, were thrown to the ground; and some of them received such blows on their breasts, as they could hardly breathe for a good while after. And the Courtier, having overcome all that withstood him, threw the ball over the lists and won the Prize. At which the Florentines were so astonished as they took a solemn

oath never to admit of any Courtier more to play with them: as men who in running had winged heels and were rather Devils than men in justling, thrusting, making men keep back and making room for themselves in crowds and making way there where people flock most; in the art of never suffering the ball to fall to the ground when they have gotten it, nor ever to be taken from them, and in giving their adversaries such deadly squelches as they shall never rise again."

That is a good example of Boccacini's manner. It is also of interest to the historians of Football, by whom the game of Calcio seems to have been overlooked. It is a commonplace that both Greeks and Romans in classical times played at ball. With the Greeks the game seems to have borne a general resemblance to English football, for the players on one side had to carry the ball over a line defended by

the other side, by any and every means. The Roman game, on the contrary, consisted simply of striking a ball and keeping it in the air, and their *follis* corresponded with the "balloon ball" of the Middle Ages. But whilst writers on football have noted these facts, they one and all assume or assert that of the game known from the Middle Ages to the present time as football no trace can be found in any country but England. The game of Calcio as described by our Italian Satirist points, I think, to a different conclusion.

XV.

DIVINE DISCONTENT.

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"A mind content both crown and kingdom is."

—ROBERT GREENE.

IF necessity is the mother of invention, discontent is as certainly the mother of progress, the fruitful parent of great works. There is no quality so human, none, it might be supposed, less known in Heaven. But, somehow or other, the epithet "divine" has got itself attached to this quality. Are we to believe, then, that the nearer we get to Heaven the more discontented we become? Do the angels, one wonders, plot and scheme to be made archangels?

Not that a lack of ambition or an absence of wants is necessarily productive of content. The want-nothing state of mind by which the Stoic philosophers defined True Happiness and Perfection is as alien to human nature as it is to the premisses of political economy. Wants are our most priceless possessions. They only lose their value when they are satisfied.

For, like a nation, a man must either advance or go backward, improve or deteriorate. He cannot lie still in the lap of content. Yet generations of philosophers have preached to us the praise of contentment, as if it were a bed to be ceaselessly slept in, with perfect immunity. Would they have us envy the placid goodness of those whose minds have never been disturbed by passion or intelligence or who have never felt "the spur which the clear spirit doth raise?" Does not the sluggish content they preach imply rather a lethargy than an actual pastime? This

anæmic content of theirs is, if you examine it, but a heavy privation of joy, an eradication of the passions which are the excellent wings of the soul; a mortification of the mind, issuing inevitably in a gangrene.

Contentment, then, is not healthy as an abiding condition: compared with it, discontent, which stirs us to make for higher things, and to live laborious days, is divine.

For the man of active mind, conscious of the pettiness of his own achievements, realising the failure of his own successes, perceiving the miseries and injustices of life on every side of him, it is impossible to be for long content. Contented days but hardly contented years are possible for him. He may drug himself for a while with successful works, but there will come an awakening of bitterness. He cannot live all his life "shut up in measureless content." He may close his eyes for a time to the insignificance of

his performances, but ere long he will have to perceive it.

Then, like an anonymous eighteenth century poet, he will perhaps write, but not so charmingly, an ode to that fickle Goddess, Contentment:—

- “Eden knew thee for a day
But thou would'st no longer stay;
Ousted for poor Adam's sin
By a flaming Cherubin;
Yet thou lov'st that happy shade
Where thy beauteous form was made,
And thy kindness still remains
To the woods, and flowery plains.
- “Happy David found thee there,
Sporting in the open air;
As he led his flocks along,
Feeding on his rural songs;
But when Courts and Honours had
Snatched away the lovely lad,
Thou, that there no room could'st find,
Let him go, and staid behind.
- “His wise Son, with care and pain
Search'd all Nature's frame in vain,
For a while content to be;
Search'd it round, and found not thee.
Beauty own'd she knew thee not,
Plenty had thy name forgot:
Musick only did aver
Once you came and danced with her.”

The fact is that though the desire of fame is the origin of discontent in noble minds, yet fame, when acquired, does not bring content. It is only when he has reached his goal that the clear-minded man usually perceives that the goal was not worth reaching. And having achieved success he naturally begins to underrate the gift which has enabled him to succeed. He sets an exaggerated value upon the gifts, which he knows he has not. He begins to desire "this man's art and that man's scope." He does not hunger for new realms to conquer but to conquer other realms. Therefore, 'Dante once began to paint an angel' and Dickens would gladly have sacrificed all his fame as a writer to be a great actor. Thus painters would be poets and poets men of action, humorists judges, and judges humorists, and thus it is that brilliant surgeons publish volumes of anonymous nonsense, striving to be minor poets, whilst the wonderful skill with which they use the knife on

suffering humanity, as they possess it, they deem less wonderful.

Chiefly, it would seem, if one may judge from their letters, their writings and their biographies, that men of the artistic temperament, whether they be painters, authors or musicians, are liable to divine discontent. Partly because they are by nature more reflective and self-conscious, partly because they suffer continually from the reaction of the excitement in which they work, they are subject in a more or less degree to fits of discontent that border on despondency and despair. The letters of Robert Louis Stevenson afford a sufficient illustration of my meaning. But there are other reasons which account for their discontent. Their desire for fame has spurred them to work, but their work is of such a kind that they can analyze it when completed and compare it with the ideal at which they had aimed. They may awake to find themselves famous, but they of all men are at

once and most acutely aware of the blemishes in their works and therefore of the flaws in their title to Fame. Therefore you may know a true artist by his modesty. For the restless desire to achieve the ideal which haunts him, which he sees in part, but never face to face, the vain struggle to attain the unattainable and to reproduce here on earth the perfect copy of that pattern, which, like that of the Socratic State, is laid up in Heaven, this it is, combined with the knowledge of the failure which attends each of his efforts, however great and however in worldly wise successful, that fills the artist with divine discontent.

Perhaps his disease, therefore, deserves the epithet which he has given it.

It is for him the inevitable reward of his labours and it has no regard for worldly success. This is and must be the lot of a Shakespere, a Balzac, a Rembrandt, of any and of all the great creators, the

great artists, yes, and of the least who are sincere. For when they compare the work they have wrought with the ideal they strove to imitate, a dissatisfaction with their own limitations must enter in and divine discontent possess their souls. "Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity"—said the Preacher, the great pessimist, who was both an artist and a man of action, reviewing all the glories and achievements and delights of his life—"but the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Philosophically as well as ethically, as we shall see, he was right. There must be some guiding impulse, some all-pervading ideal in a man's life to make it endurable.

Men, pricked with the restless desire of repose, cry aloud to be shown the road to a quiet happiness. There are many panaceas offered them. There is, as we have said, the Stoic cure of wanting nothing; of having no desires, except for "a chainless soul, with courage to endure" and breathing no prayer save,

"Leave the heart that now I bear And give me Liberty." It is inhuman. The boast of Petronius, "I have always and everywhere so lived that I might consume the passing light as if it were not to return," is more easily admired than imitated, and the philosophy of the Roman poet who advises us to count as gain every happy moment is not easy except for men of most equable temperaments and uneventful lives. The more subtle psychology is displayed by Shelley when he reflects that "Sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things." Still, others do recommend the cure of comparison. You are advised to remember, when you have the tooth-ache that you are fortunate not to have the ear-ache and all the other aches as well, and to be thankful. This philosophy is more satisfying for the physician than the sufferer. Or, if your distress be mental, you are told to contemplate your physical well-being. The advice is useless. Content or discontent has little to

do with material prosperity. Some of the most miserable men are millionaires, some of the most light-hearted, Micawbers. Not the least happy of mankind are the penniless, for their wants are definite and easily gratified. Such men are divided from happiness by a mere twopence. "If I only had twopence," thinks the starving wretch, "how happy I should be with half a loaf and half a pint." He omits the aspirates, but the millionaire who has all the luxury of the material world at his disposal and finds it vanity, may, if he is educated, keep the aspirates also, and yet be further off from happiness by a million pounds, less two-pence, than his destitute brother. For the millionaire, in the case I suppose, has compassed his object of accumulating wealth and has no longer anything to which he can busily aspire. "*Le bonheur c'est le mouvement*," says someone in Scribe's plays; was it Bolingbroke?—" *Le malheur c'est le repos*," expressing in the neat French manner the secret of

happiness for a man of action. For what is more pitiable than the man who has obtained his desire? Man's aim, indeed, is always to culminate, but the saddest thing in the world is for him to feel that he has achieved this aim. What fancied condition of contentment, he will then demand, wants its sting and venom? Wealth does not make a man invulnerable; honour cannot make a man secure. Fame is easily blasted and brings in its decline a double ignominy. Health may render a man active but is ever at the mercy of a plumber or a cook. What happiness is there of this sort but time would make it burdensome and repetition loathsome? The rack itself would at length be preferable to unvaried repose upon a bed of roses. The taste soon wearies of the sweetest delicacies. Even Tithonus, it is said, grew weary of himself and was glad to shuffle off his immortal coil and shrink into a grasshopper——

Moments of discontent are inevitable, desirable almost, it would appear, in every life. But to enjoy a sane content and to be reconciled with existence, a man's mind should have a dominant purpose, and a definite ambition to obtain a certain object which shines beyond him as the sun of all his days, illuminating the petty details of his life, tinging the minor pleasures of it with a more cheerful radiance and rendering less dark the darkest moments of disappointment and sorrow. Towards this object all his desires will tend and all his efforts be directed. "When the soul is in a ferment," wrote Keats in the preface to his "Endymion," "the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted," mawkishness and a thousand bitters arise. Or as the language of modern philosophy would phrase it, man's mental condition is not satisfactory unless there exists a noetic synthesis. To choose for ourselves some object in life that will not fail us, and on which we

may concentrate all our energies and vague desires is, then, the road to happiness and content. We shall strive, if we are wise, to the uttermost,

“For our life’s set prize, be it what it will,”

nor will our fervour be at all abated if we perceive that our ideals are unrealizable. But should a man not find this remedy to his hand let him try Shakespere’s cure (not greatly different, after all) for this dire disease of the malcontent. Shakespere knew both the disease and cure. He knew, he suffered, he lived, he loved.

“When in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes

I all alone bewEEP my outcast state,

And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries

And look upon myself and curse my fate,

Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,

Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,

Desiring this man’s art and that man’s scope,

With what I most enjoy, contented least;

Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,

Haply I think on thee, and then my state,

Like to the lark at break of day arising

From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven’s gate;

For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings,

That then I scorn to change my state with kings.”

Love is the panacea : love the cure for all things. Love of the one sweet face, love of the one sympathetic soul that completes, that satisfies that understands us, not only in the moment of our endeavour or of our achievement, but in the hour of humiliation also, and in our poorest, dullest mood. And there is the ampler love, the nobler, more unselfish resource. It lies in the love of our fellow men, in the all-embracing sympathy with our human brethren. Just to remember that Jones is more miserable than you are and that you can cheer him, just to remember that Smith needs more aid than you do, and that you can help him, just to realize that Robinson is dying for a word of encouragement and that you can utter it or that if Brown has sinned deeply according to your canons, you also have sinned and can sympathize, or at least need not unsparingly condemn : just to remember and act upon these things, in the spirit of one who in the best sense of the word thanks God

that he is not as other men are, is to cure your melancholy and to soothe your discontent, if it is indeed divine. For those who learn how to console others have themselves less need of consolation.

But I grow serious at the end of a flippant volume.

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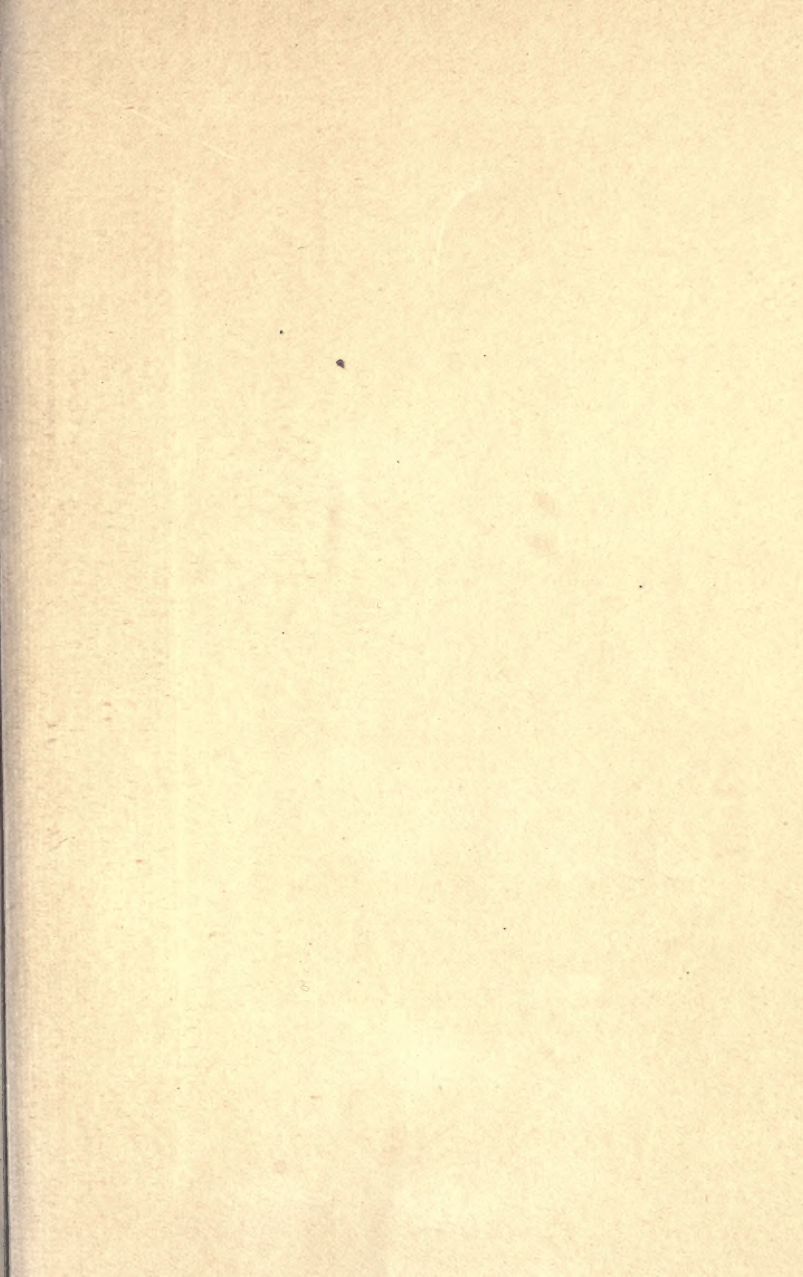
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